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NEPALESE IN TIBET: A CASE STUDY OF NEPALESE HALF-BREEDS (1856-1956)

Tirtha P. Mishra

Introduction

History of Nepal-Tibet relations can be traced from the ancient period. One of the substantive attributes of historical intercourse between the two trans-Himalayan countries was the growth of Nepalese half-breeds or *Khacharas*. Geo-politic imperatives and the commercial considerations were the fundamental factors that effected the unique and exceptional historical development of the *Khacharas* system. *Khacharas* constituted an important factor which greatly influenced Nepal-Tibet relations during the period between 1856 to 1956. Therefore, the study of substantive aspects of the *Khachara* deserves our attention.

Economic factors invariably play a decisive role in the foreign policy of any country. The Nepalese foreign policy was essentially governed by economic considerations. Since ancient times commerce emerged as the main determinant phenomenon in Nepal's relation with her neighboring countries. Specially, after the opening of Kerung route in 17th century closer interaction among China, Tibet, India and Nepal had developed. Consequently Kathmandu turned into a prime center of Trans-Himalayan communications and became a meeting ground of all traders. In fact political instability in Tibet after 7th century facilitated Nepal to monopolise Tibetan trade.

Nepalese trade with Tibet further expanded during medieval period regulating trade traffic between India and Tibet. Though history of Nepal-Tibet relations had long historical background there was no defined treaty, contract, or pact which outline the statutory frame work to regularize the relationship. It was only a historical development of no contact between two countries based on oriental diplomatic pattern guided by the commercial motives. However, dimension of Nepal – Tibet intercourse was formulated in definite logistics during 17th century. Exploiting the weak political situation

in Tibet, Kantipur attack and forced her to sign a treaty (1645-50) which acquired substantial privileges for Kantipur in Tibet.

1. Firstly, The Kathmandu traders were permitted to establish thirty-two trading marts at Lhasa.
2. The Kathmandu King was authorized to appoint a representative (Nayo in Newar, Nayak in Nepali) at the Court of Lhasa.
3. Tibet agreed not to impose any sort of duties on Newar merchants throughout Tibet.
4. Kathmandu obtained a right of minting coins for Tibet and Tibet agreed to pay for required quantity of silver and gold.
5. Tibet agreed to conduct all trade with India, via Nepal even though conducted by other than Newar merchants.

The most important than these was the privilege that Nepalese could marry Tibetan women, male offspring from such marriage were regarded Nepalese subjects. Contemporary documents have referred these Tibetan born Nepalese as *Khacharas* so the same terminology is being used in this paper. It is interesting to note that the female child from a Nepalese father and Tibetan mother was acknowledged as a Tibetan citizen. The Tibetan government agreed to accept the *Khacharas* as Nepalese subjects and granted them the privileges and facilities accorded to the Nepalese traders in Tibet. The *Khachara* system was an peculiar system and exceptional privilege which established Nepalese jurisdiction over Tibetan born Nepalese.

The Kantipur-Tibet treaty in fact was the turning point in the history of Nepal –Tibet relations. The privileges facilitated the Nepalese traders to acquire monopoly in Tibetan trade. In addition to this, it encouraged Nepalese traders to reside in Tibet. Later on these privileges were extended to the traders of Bhaktapur and Lalitpur, the other principalities of Kathmandu valley. This tremendously helped to spread Nepalese trade and settlements all over Tibet. Consequently the number of *Khacharas* increased through the years to become an integral component of Nepal-Tibet relations. Nevertheless, no alteration was made in the status of *Khacharas* for centuries and the same tradition prevailed up to the mid 20th century.

During modern period, three major Nepal-Tibet treaties of 1789, 1792 and 1856 A.D. defined Nepal's relation with her northern neighbours in new prospective which regulated the dynamics of Nepal-Tibet affairs.¹ But as they remained silent regarding the question of Nepalese *Khacharas*. The system perpetuated as before. However, by 20th century the *Khachara* problem

became more complex due to unsympathetic attitude of both Nepal and Tibet and it needed co-ordinated restructuring of the system. It was further complicated by increasingly assertive policy of China towards Tibet. Nepal was obliged to readjust her policy towards Tibet vis-à-vis China after Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1950. Need for a basic format of a new diplomatic structure became necessary after China and India signed Panchasheel in 1954. So Nepal China peace and friendship treaty was concluded in 1955 and 1956 which not only recognized Tibet as the autonomous region of China but also abrogated all the privileges and rights enjoyed by Nepal in Tibet. This ended *Khachara* system as well.

Despite the fact that Nepal Tibet trade existed since Lichchhavi period, the number of Nepali traders settled in Tibet was meager due to several causes – long distance, geo-political condition and cultural differences. But the advantages of Pratap Malla's treaty not only enhanced the volume of trade but also encouraged traders to establish settlements in Tibet. The exceptional matrimonial prerogative and *Khachara* system gradually multiplied the number of Nepalese traders settled in Lhasa. Subsequently Nepalese settlement extended in other strategic parts of Tibet, such as Sighatse (Digarcha), Gyantse, Yatung, Kuti, Kerung etc., and their number gradually multiplied. It was generally accepted that Nepalese traders were not permitted to take their family, specially wives along with them to Tibet. Rahul (B.S. 1990: 111) Sankrityayan has remarked that Nepalese merchants and even the officials were forbidden to take their wives to Tibet. Though no such preventive documentary evidence is available as yet, it is quite intriguing to note that none of the Nepalese merchants, envoys or officials were accompanied by their wives. There seems some plausible reasons for this trend. First of all, journey to Tibet was very difficult, and the situation was equally unfavourable. Secondly traders had to travel frequently from *Bhot* to *Muglan* and vice versa leaving their family behind in Tibet. Thirdly they could conveniently marry a Tibetan girl and such marriage could be advantageous to their trade also. So it is a fact that Nepalese woman seldom accompanied their spouses. Therefore most of the Nepalese residing in Tibet had married Tibetan women. Contemporary writers and travelers had recounted this fact. For instance one British officer accompanying Younghusband's mission to Tibet in 1904 had mentioned that all seven Nepalese traders at Gyantse had kept Tibetan wives (Waddell 1975: 214). Here it must be remembered that polygamy was legally and customarily accepted in both Nepal and Tibet. It is said that only a woman deserving

capital punishment was banished to Tibet. But there is no authentic evidence to verify it. Only on the basis of an unaccounted rumour that one court lady named Mathura was banished to Tibet for the alleged charge of poisoning queen Rajendra Laxmi, it can be ascertained that Nepalese women condemned with capital punishment were exiled to Tibet (Nepal B.S. 2040: 206). So in those days Nepalese women rarely traveled to Tibet.

Number of *Khacharas* in Tibet

The exact number of *Khacharas* in Tibet can not be authentically ascertained due to unavailability of systematic census and official record. Indeed, it did not occasion any serious problem in the beginning because *Khacharas* were in small number. But with the increment in trade volume and Nepalese traders' settlement in Tibet their number increased significantly. The Nepalese government never attempted to keep systematic record of *Khacharas*. When occasional dispute related to *Khachara* created diplomatic problem in Nepal during mid-Ranarchial period, only then the Nepalese government showed its concern and took measures to keep records of these half-breeds.

Letter of Chandra Shamsher dated B.S. 1970 Bhadra 18th (Sept. 1913) instructed *Vakil* of Lhasa Lal Bahadur Basnet to maintain records of birth-places, three generations of *Khacharas* and enlist any alteration in it and send one copy to him. Because in absence of proper record it was difficult to distinguish Nepalese Subjects in such cases where *Khacharas* were involved in litigation, had frequent disputes occurred in the past. So Chandra Shamsher instructed chief of Digarcha office ordering to investigate among the head of the community (*Thakalis*) about the ancestral lineage of the *Khacharas* and prepare a record.² It shows Nepal government's concern in the matter. But the measures taken were not scientific and sufficient.

According to the report, the number of *Khacharas* in Kerung, Kuti, Digarcha and Lhasa were respectively 80, 248, 112, and 183. In 1913 A.D., there were 24 and 40 *Khacharas* respectively in Gamti and Chitau villages. Likewise the total number of *Khacharas* in Rongpale, Derong, Sunkha, Dahi, Labara and Koga was 122 and there were 59 *Khacharas* in the rest part of Tibet (Nepal B.S. 2045: 210-12). However, except these numbers in certain localities, the total number of *Khacharas* in whole Tibet has not been yet confirmed and no such record has been found yet. According to the account of British diplomat Charles Bell (1924: 233) who was in Tibet during 1920s, there were around 600/700 Nepali traders and approximately 1000

Khacharas. It is speculated that the number of *Khacharas* towards 1956 were more than two thousand.

Khacharas' Occupation

The Tibetan born Nepalese were settled in almost all business centres of Tibet and had varied occupation. As these people were the offspring's of Nepalese traders, it was natural that they adopted business profession. Half-breeds had even placed themselves as notable traders in Lhasa, Gyantse, Shigatse, Yatung, Kuti and Kerrung. One of the records of B.S. 1960 (1903 A.D.) indicates that the Nepalese *Khacharas* had owned at least twenty three trading houses throughout Tibet.³ The same sources further mentioned that Tibetan government had listed two *Khacharas* among the 14 top merchants of Tibet.

For example Rin Jin Topke and Dhorje Dhamdi were leading wool and yak tail merchants. But most of the *Khacharas* were small business men and venders as they lacked skill and opportunity. Sometimes with the implicit protection and encouragement from Nepalese officials and *Vakils*, *Khacharas* were even engaged in illegal trafficking of contraband goods such as opium and coral (Mishra 1991: 254-255). Furthermore, a number of *Khacharas* operated wine bars in different parts of Tibet. Besides trade, *Khacharas* were sometimes employed in government services also. As they could speak the Tibetan language fluently, some of them served as official bilingual interpreter at office of *Vakil* in Lhasa and Nepalese office at Gyantse.⁵ Account refers that on several occasions, they worked as secret service agent as well for Nepal government. During the Anglo-Tibetan crisis of 1903-4 *Vakil* Jit Bahadur commissioned *Khacharas* to spy on both the parties as instructed by the Nepalese government.⁶ *Vakil* reported to the Nepalese government that secret agents were hired to inquire into British activities in Yatung. During this crisis Nepalese rendered great service to the British by passing all the important secret information to British government. Jit Bahadur used Nepalese *Khacharas* to gather information about secret activities of Dorjeif (Khendechaga) and surreptitious connection between Russia and Tibet. Similarly they were engaged to keep watch on the activities of Dalai Lama and the four *Kazis*. Likewise during Sino-Tibetan crisis (1908-1912), Nepal-Tibet dispute of 1928-30, *Khacharas* gathered information about secret activities of Tibet.⁷ However, as most of the *Khacharas* were uneducated and inefficient, Nepal government could not be benefit as much as was desired from their services. Not only that, sometimes it had negative

results also and the *Vakils* were reprimanded by the government for the wrong information.⁸ On the whole with a few exceptions not many of the *Khacharas* were in any remarkable positions.

Due to negligent and irresponsible attitude of Nepalese traders towards their *Khachara* offsprings, they were deprived of not only paternal property but also education, training and guidance. So only a few were in prestigious government and mercantile services. Rest of them were mostly shepherds, porters and labourers (Bista 1980: 1-20). Where as the situation of Nepalese born people in Tibet was entirely different. Almost all of these people were wealthy enough and were leading prestigious lives as *Mahajans* and government officers.

Nepal Government's policy towards *Khacharas*

During all phases of Nepal-Tibet relations, the striking feature of Nepalese governmental policy towards *Khacharas* was of exploitation and lack of concern for the protection of rights and welfare of *Khacharas*. *Khacharas* were politically ignored, economically exploited and socially discarded by both Nepal and Tibet. Nepal government acknowledged them as Nepalese subjects only to exact tax and free labour from them. Indeed, Nepalese officials in Tibet always supported *Khacharas* in case of any dispute between *Khacharas* and Tibetans but it was for their own vested interests rather than any consideration for *Khacharas*. Even their legitimate grievances were ignored and justice was denied to them by Nepalese government. On several occasions, *Khacharas* had complained to Rana prime minister against the maltreatment by Nepalese officials but to no avail. For instance, *Khacharas* and *Mahajans* (merchants) petitioned against *Vakil* Malika Prasad and that case was heard by the head *Kazi* of the quinquennial mission to China (Mishra 1984: 5). But no conclusive result of that trial is known.

In yet another instance Kaziman and Norbu Chhiring came to Nepal to plead before Chandra Shamsher against *Vakil* Jit Bahadur Khatri with the petition signed by 70 *Khacharas*. According to the petition, he was alleged to have not paid for the transportation of 50 packs of luggage. When inquired, he claimed that the load was only five or six bags. However, Chandra Shamsher made him pay for all the 50 bags. At the same time he cautioned the *Vakil* that all Nepalese subjects in Tibet must be exacted customary dues only and administered fairly by *Vakil's* office without any undue harassment, otherwise the later would not be able to maintain the dignity of the office.⁹ Though Chandra Shamsher reprimanded the *Vakil*, no further action was

taken against him. One of the reasons behind the dismissal of Jit Bahadur could be his attitude towards *Khacharas* but definitely that was not the only cause. This seems to be the single instance when *Khacharas* had come to Nepal to secure justice because only few could afford such a costly venture. Notwithstanding the report of Jit Bahadur that except the case of Norbu Chhiring, no other complaint was ever known, it can hardly be believed. Mostly *Khacharas* were simple and uneducated so they dared not venture to complain against the local officials and at any case if they did, so their plea was arbitrarily dismissed and not registered at all. That is why such records are very rare. Of course only on the basis of one or two such cases it can not be substantiated that the *Khacharas* were always oppressed and exploited by all the *Vakils*. None the less Nepal governments statutory neglect in this regard not only made justice unattainable to them but also subjected them to the exploitation by Nepalese officials in Tibet.

Down to mid-20th century Nepal formulated no consistent policy for the welfare of *Khacharas*. For centuries, they were accustomed to such neglect. But the report of Jit Bahadur shows that with the opening of 20th century they were slowly awakening to rationalize their discontent on the legitimate grounds. However, their consternation was caused much by economic hardship rather than legitimacy of entitlement or any political aspirations. As already mentioned, the most galling feature of *Khachara* system was that they were dispossessed of the paternal property. According to the report of *Vakil* Jit Bahadur, in case of death of a Nepalese merchant in Tibet his property was bequeathed to the descendent only from Nepalese side. Article related to heir-less property stipulates that in case of the death of a merchant without legitimate heir the property of the deceased merchant was to be deposited to national treasury even if the *Khachara* offspring of the deceased merchant was alive. Only the descendent from the marriage among *Khacharas* could inherit the property of *Khachara* parents. The report further states that *Khacharas* generally bemoaned that neglected by both Nepal and Tibet they were left in lurch. The main resentment among the *Khacharas* was that they had worked equally hard in paternal earnings. So they did not deserve to be deprived of the paternal property and live in wretched condition. What they wanted was a small share of the paternal property.⁹ But Nepal government never took any significant measure to improve the general condition of *Khacharas*.

Tibetan government was naturally not disposed to treat *Khacharas* sympathetically as they were deemed Nepalese subjects. So *Khacharas* could

feel bondage towards neither Tibet nor Nepal. Only if, Nepal government had acknowledged partial inheritance right, Nepal could have commanded more allegiance. To comprehend *Khachara* problem in true perspective, it should be remembered that if a high caste Nepalese married even a woman of low caste, the descendents were entitled to share paternal property (Khanal B.S. 2026: 153-55). Therefore such discrimination for *Khacharas* alienated them from Nepal.

The *Khacharas* remained obligated in various ways to Nepal government, they were taxed two tanka (equivalent to six annas) annually in live or the facilities granted by the government. Likewise they had to pay death tax of 12 annas for *sota khata* and eight annas in cash. *Khacharas* were liable to pay two *kala mohar* to *Vakil* as gift or *salami* (as other traders) while changing their regular place of trading. This money was regarded as the private purse of the *Vakil* and not deposited in national treasury. Even for being Buddhist monk (Banda), besides the dues of one *khata* and two *black mohars* permission of the *Vakil* was also mandatory. Though they were deemed to be Nepalese subjects, they were charged eight annas for their passport to Nepal and had to pay other dues like any other foreign trader.¹⁰ Apart from such taxes, they were subjected to obligatory free labour and other such exploitations. Due to such unsympathetic and discriminating attitude, Nepal could not succeed in winning the minds of *Khachara* citizens even after centuries and *Khacharas* were gradually alienated and finally repudiated their connection with China in 1956.

The Attitude of Tibetan Government Towards *Khacharas*

The social behaviour of a country is generally determined by different conditioning factors. The long traditional ties constituted the basic framework of Nepal-Tibet relations which was further conditioned in expression by the different treaties and pacts between them. The resulting outcome of these factors was expressed more obviously in terms of Tibetan governmental policy towards *Khacharas*. Tibet was intensely jealous of extra-territorial rights enjoyed by Nepal in Tibet. The most humiliating provision of it being *Khachara* system which injured their national pride. So Tibet was naturally not only unsympathetic but hostile to *Khacharas*. Her antagonism towards *Khacharas* was manifested in various ways. They were usually harassed and unduly taxed. Flouting the treaty stipulations, they were often tried in Tibetan court without referring to Nepalese officials in Tibet. Of course, the fact that *Khacharas* were engaged in illegal trade of contraband goods under the

protection of Nepalese officials also served as an extra-irritant. Moreover, Tibetans had always resented that in case of dispute between Tibetan subjects and *Khacharas*, the Nepalese officials, disregarding the evidence always justified *Khacharas*. Such irritants were also responsible to generating negative attitude of Tibetan government as well as public towards *Khacharas*.

So *Khacharas* were occasional victims of Tibetan hostilities. Many times their houses and properties were ravaged. Though sometimes they were indemnified by Tibetan government when protested by Nepalese *Vakil*, mostly they were not atoned for the loss. Notwithstanding the fact that in 1883 the Tibetan government compensated Nepalese traders including *Khacharas* for the damage of their property and life, there are many instances when, despite repeated protests from Nepalese *Vakil*, Tibetan government had not responded. Such incidents were quite frequent up to as late as the 3rd decade of 20th century (Mishra B.S. 1953: 12-25).

Defying customary convention, Nepalese traders were subjected to custom duty for exporting goods to India via Phari trade route, after it was opened in 1904. This strained Nepal-Tibet relations. Consequently *Khacharas* had to suffer great loss in trade. When protested, their goods were confiscated by Tibetan government Nepalese *Vakil* even pleaded to Panchen Lama when nothing came out of prolonged correspondence with Tibetan officials. But all the overtures of Nepalese *Vakil* failed and at last it was established that Nepalese merchants were liable to pay customs duty on exporting goods to India via Phari.¹¹

Dispute occurred when Tibetan government tried to levy tax on wine bars of *Khacharas*. Nepalese *Vakil* vehemently objected to this as he was instructed by the government that according to the convention Nepal was authorized to collect tax upon wine bars of *Khacharas*. Another dispute was regarding house rent Many *Khacharas* lived in rented house and Tibet did not hesitate to take the slightest pretext to express her malice towards *Khacharas*. It was a conventionally accepted regulation that as long as the Nepalese tenants paid the rent of the house regularly, Tibetan landlord could not dislodge them. According to Lhasa record book, Tibetan government had no demand over Nepalese subjects merchants, *Khacharas* and muslims except the agreed amount of rent and Tibetan landlord could not oust Nepalese tenants even if they were offered higher rent by Tibetans.¹² But contrary to the norms the *Khacharas* were some times expelled unceremoniously from the house though they paid their rent regularly.¹³

To harass *Khacharas*, Tibetan government enforced a new tax called *Amata* and compulsory free labour upon wives and daughters of *Khacharas*. Though this was against the prevailing convention. According to Chandra Shamsher's instruction to *Vakil Lal Bahadur*, in this regard, wives and daughters of Nepalese subjects were exempted from any taxation or obligation towards Tibet as long as they stayed with Nepalese subjects. In a similar incident earlier, an attempt of Tibetan government to tax wives and daughters of *Khacharas* had triggered the conflict between Nepal and Tibet in the year B.S. 1766.¹⁴ After long negotiation with Kasyal it had been settled then that Tibet had no authority over them. So Chandra Shamsher ordered *Vakil* to follow the same precedence. On the basis of this letter it had been argued that wife and daughter of a *Khachara* were rendered the same status as the *Khachara* himself.¹⁵ Notwithstanding the fact that they enjoyed such protection from Nepal government as long as they lived with the Nepalese subject, they were denied the status of Nepalese subjects. Tibetan government, nevertheless, often violated this convention and tended to harass them by extra-taxation and forced labour.

According to the treaty of 1856, it had been accepted for all practical purpose that any dispute between a Nepalese and Tibetan subject was to be decided by the joint judiciary committee of Nepal and Tibet. But it is evidenced that defying the treaty obligation they used to punish *Khacharas* arbitrarily. For example in 1929 one *Khachara* was whipped 200 times and detained for three days for the breach of a local tradition.¹⁶

For centuries Nepal had enjoyed the special prerogatives and position in Tibet. But with the opening of Tibet to British influence the equation and equilibrium had been shifting. So Tibet was not willing anymore to accommodate her policy according to the traditional pattern. And this behavioural change in her mood was expressed more oftenly in her attitude towards *Khacharas*. However, geopolitical determinism, historical affinity, political considerations were the predominant factors that suggested Tibet to pursue the same structural framework up to 1956.

Chinese Policy Towards *Khacharas*

From the ancient period Tibet was directly or indirectly under Chinese sphere of influence (barring for few decades of 20th century). Although, Chinese authority in Tibet remained vague and nebulous in practice, Chinese paternalistic position was never challenged. Physical distance, difficult transport and communication made it difficult for China to assert her

influence consistently in Tibet. Taking advantage of this Nepal had increased her influence, indeed, taking special care not to offend China or to challenge her objectives in Tibet in any way. Nepal had diplomatically adjusted her policy towards Tibet to accommodate Chinese interest and position in Tibet. So China also was favourably disposed towards the special interest of Nepal in Tibet as long as Nepalese interest did not clash with Chinese interests and objectives. So Chinese attitude towards *Khacharas* was not specifically underlined. Though *Khacharas* were sometimes harassed by Chinese officials residing in Tibet, that was their personal doings not the governmental manouvering.

However, Trans-Himalayan political development of early 20th century brought a significant change in policy of China towards Tibet. This had great bearing in Chinese attitude not only towards *Khacharas* but Nepalese as a whole. Specially during Sino-Tibetan crisis of 1908-12 China often tended to undermine the long established privileges and prerogatives of Nepal in Tibet openly.

Defying the prevailing convention Chinese authorities in Tibet arbitrarily imposed tax upon *Khacharas*, interfered in internal litigation among *Khacharas*, arbitrated the judicial case between *Khacharas* and Tibetan locals without intimating Nepalese authorities. Nepalese government repeatedly protested against such overbearing attitude of Chinese authorities. But Chinese government completely disregarded it. There are several instances when Chinese authorities deliberately pestered *Khacharas* for trivial offences and coerced them to unpaid labour.¹⁷ According to the conventional usage, *Khacharas* had to salute Chinese Ambans. But there are instances when they were forced to kowtow (to kneel down). Nepalese were now required to take passport and license for gun from Yamun (office of Chinese officials Ambans). During Sino-Tibetan crisis Chinese authorities in Tibet has requested Nepalese *Vakil* Jit Bahadur for the permission of recruitment of *Khacharas* in Chinese army. The Nepalese *Vakil* not only refuse this but debarred *Khacharas* from joining Chinese army voluntarily. In complete disregard of this Chinese enrolled *Khacharas* in Chinese army.¹⁸ However, after some times for unexplained reasons all the *Khacharas* defected Chinese army. All these were but a few examples of deliberate manouveration of Chinese authorities to mitigate Nepalese influence in Tibet. but after revolution of 1911-12 which overthrew Manchu dynastic monarchy and established Republic, China was preoccupied in her own internal politics and for some time could not pursue assertive policy towards Tibet. Taking

advantage of this Tibet expelled Chinese officials from her soil. This consequently affected Chinese influence in Tibet for sometimes. During this time China's relation with Nepal also was passive. Probably that is why after 1912 the documents related to *Khacharas* do not speak about Chinese involvement in it.

Social Condition of *Khacharas*

Complex *Khacharas* system originated in 17th century had since then caused considerable influence in many aspect of Nepal-Tibet relations extending from 17th century to 1956. Much has been written about Nepal Tibet relations. But so far there has been no attempt to focus on *Khacharas*, their social condition, culture, tradition etc. Unavailability of documents and evidences is quite understandable and this makes the comprehensive study of the subject quite difficult. However, some related description of social condition of the *Khacharas* has been outlined below.

Interesting fact about *Khacharas* is that only the descendents of Nepalese merchant of Newar community were leveled *Khacharas*. Sherpas and other inhabitants of northern border of Nepal also conducted trade in Tibet and married Tibetan woman but their offspring were not called *Khacharas* and not much about them is known. Though *Khacharas* were socially exploited by Nepalese government they enjoyed certain privileges and exemption from taxation in Tibet. And it seems that descendent of other ethnic communities except Newar were denied such privileges.

It appears that customarily not all the *Khacharas* adopted paternal surnames. Completely cut off from the paternal society thin acculturation process was predominantly influenced by Tibetan social norms. Almost all *Khacharas* were Buddhist. *Khacharas* were permitted even to become monk provided that there were more than one brother in the family. It can be said that to some extent *Khacharas* enjoyed religious tolerance. Though most of the Nepalese officials in Tibet were Hindus, it was not mandatory for *Khacharas* to observe Hindu socio-religious festivals such as *Dashahara*. Following Tibetan funeral tradition, *Khacharas* used to cut the corps into pieces and feed to scavenger. Chandra Shamsheer tried to reform this custom. He directed *Vakil* to order *Khacharas* to bury the dead body.¹⁹

It was hard to distinguish between *Khacharas* and local Tibetan as they were usually similar in appearance and features. So Chinese officials had often arrested *Khacharas* by mistake. Hence the Nepalese government circulated a regulation that *Khacharas* should wear Nepalese cap.²⁰ However,

it is yet doubtful that the regulation was strictly followed. Childless Newar merchant in Tibet could not adopt his own *Khachara* son as *Khacharas* were debarred from entitlement of paternal property. However, a childless *Khachara* could adopt another *Khachara* as son.²¹

It was customary to nominate one head of the clan or *Thakali* among the Nepalese traders in Tibet. In Gyantse, government used to appoint one official as *Thakali* since 1905 (Mishra 1989: 9-17). But in other parts of Tibet old tradition of *Thakali* selection prevailed. *Thakali* of *Khachara* were nominated from the *Khacharas* themselves. Newar merchant *Thakali* was exempted from "gyan panji" Tax. But for *Khachara Thakali* there was no extra privilege, as *gyan panji* was not levied upon *Khacharas*.²²

Khacharas had their own *guthi* in Tibet. They had to donate some amount according to their conciliation to the *guthi* for becoming monk. It was customary to organize feast for *Khacharas* on behalf of the government to celebrate *holi*. Similarly on return to Lhasa from China the head of quinqu social mission to China had to give Rs. 29 to *Khacharas* for feast. On death of the King of Nepal they were required to observe mourning formalities like other Nepalese citizens.²³ It is recorded that on death of King Prithvi they performed the traditional mourning rituals for 13 days and observed mourning for a period of 45 days.²⁴

Due to scant information about *Khacharas* in both Nepalese and Tibetan documents the study about them is not very clear. On the basis of few scattered information it seems that their social structure characterized specifically Buddhism with the elements of Tibetan culture and only a superficial influence of Nepalese traditions.

According to the dynastic chronicles, the treaty of Pratap Malla established office in Kuti to look after such matters as the issue of *Khachara* offspring of Nepalese traders and the property of deceased Nepalese traders in Tibet. In due course of time this office was subsequently upgraded as Lhasa *Vakil* Office.²⁵

As already mentioned there was no serious problem in the beginning as *Khacharas* were not numerous. But as they grew in numbers, *Khacharas* dispute not only troubled Nepalese government, it also became a regular deterrent in Nepal-Tibet relations. The fundamental cause of it was the Tibetan resentment for the unwanted position accorded to the *Khacharas* in Tibet. Documents shows that at times, Tibetan authorities had requested Nepalese government to check unruly and aggressive behaviour of *Khacharas*. They complained that *Khacharas* violated socio-religious

customs of land and harassed the Tibetans. One of the main accusations labeled against *Khacharas* was that they used to carry contraband trade under the protection of Nepalese authorities in Lhasa and Gyantse (Bell 1924: 230-35). But Nepal government does not seem to have taken such objections seriously. Such apathetic attitude of Nepal government generated deep rooted distrust and jealousy for the *Khacharas*. But of course it must be taken into account that the complaints were not always true and rational. Some times they were fabricated and exaggerated just out of jealousy.

Nepal government naturally favoured growth of *Khacharas* in Tibet as she benefited economically from taxes, fines and other financial dues levied upon *Khacharas*. But more important than that it provided great leverage to her in Tibet. *Khacharas* also preferred to be Nepalese subjects as they were exempted from harsher taxes and laws of Tibetan government. Therefore, the objective of Tibetan policy was to harass *Khacharas* so as to contain their activities in Tibet.

From the beginning of 20th century, the pattern of Nepal's relations with Tibet underwent gradual change as the result of two major developments—first the active interest of British in Tibet following the so called British "era of commercial optimism" in Tibet and secondly, decline of Chinese power. Both the factors prompted Tibet to undermine Nepalese prerogatives in Tibet which caused frequent misunderstandings and disputes. Tibetans turned more assertive and less compliant towards Nepalese. Tibetan government demanded that Tibetan government should be permitted to collect tax from *Khacharas* on behalf of the Nepalese government so as to check the unruly and aggressive behaviour of *Khacharas* in Tibet (Updety 1980: 146). They requested Nepalese government to keep records of birth and death of *Khacharas*. From the contemporary correspondence it appears that they had even approached Nepalese government for an arrangement whereby *Khacharas* should become Tibetan citizens after a certain time interval. Nepal government, quite aware of Tibetan motive, had no intention to compromise its traditional position so did not entertain any propositions. This strained Nepal-Tibet relations. Again Tibetan government offered an alternative proposal that the dues payable by *Khacharas* be increased to five times which was to be delivered by Tibetan government to Nepal on condition that *Khacharas* should be subjected to the Tibetan jurisdiction (Prem 1980: 1407). But Nepal government remained silent in this matter. When all these overtures of Tibetan government failed, Kazi Charrung visited Nepal ostensibly to pay homage to Nepalese shrines but actually to negotiate

the *Khachara* question. Kazi proposed that after two generations in Tibet, the 3rd generation *Khachara* should be naturalized as Tibetan citizen (Mishra B S. 2043: 30-40). But Nepal government was reluctant to relinquish any of the traditional privileges. So all this proved abortive.

The main object of Nepal's policy in Tibet was to defend customary prerogatives secured by the previous treaties which were now being challenged by Tibetan government. The psychological as well as real effect of Tibetan jealousy was manifested in her dealings towards *Khacharas*. Tibet assumed openly hostile attitude towards *Khacharas* and arbitrarily subjected them to the laws and taxation of the land. Nepal government vehemently protested this high handed action of Tibetan government. But all the deliberations were unpropitious. This intensified the dispute to the extent that the war became eminent during 1928-30.

End of *Khachara* System

Nepal's formal diplomatic contact with China was obstructed after the fall of Manchu dynasty in 1911. However, three simultaneous political developments of mid 20th century— a) withdrawal of British from India b) end of Ranarchy in Nepal and c) establishment of communist republic in china (1949) obliged Nepal to co-ordinate her diplomatic relations with her immediate neighbours in accordance to the changed political scenario of the region. Communist China claimed sovereignty over Tibet and India formally conceded to it by 1952. Though Tibet was paying annual tribute of Rs. 100,000 until 1953, contemplating closer diplomatic relations with China, Nepal was required to accommodate her position vis-à-vis Tibet.

In 1954, Nepal expressed her desire to establish direct relations with China. China reciprocated it, giving stress in "Panchaseel" during Bandung conference in 1955. On August 1, 1956 both the countries agreed to establish diplomatic relations on the basis of fundamental principles of Panchasheel as guidelines for the relations. Accordingly Sino-Nepalese treaty was signed on 20th September 1956 and ratified on January 17, 1958. Article 3 of this treaty abrogated all the treaties and documents which existed in the past between Nepal and China including those between the Tibet region of China and Nepal. This automatically terminated all the rights and privileges of Nepal in Tibet. New commercial arrangements were made on reciprocal basis- old office were replaced by new commercial agencies, marketing points were specified, exchange of consulates general was arranged (Bhasin 1970: 185-191).

According to the article 14 of the treaty all the Nepalese residing in Tibet region of China were subjected to Chinese jurisdiction. Clause stipulated that all the people residing in Tibet and above 18 years were free to accept Chinese citizenship for themselves and their children on fulfilling prevalent legal formalities of Chinese government after which Nepalese citizenship would be automatically nullified though it was not mandatory *Khacharas* overwhelmingly accepted Chinese citizenship.

Khachara problem was one of the major disturbing factors in Nepal-Tibet relations. It mainly originated from the complex and peculiar *Khachara* system itself. Nepal always wanted Tibet to be responsive to Nepal's commercial needs. For this no measure could have been as effective as *Khachara* system. Nepalese traders could marry Tibetan woman, have children and use them for economic advantage without bearing any social obligation and economic responsibility. Perhaps, at first for the fear of leaving Nepalese human resources and property in Tibet, *Khacharas* were denied inheritance on parental properties. Population of Nepalese subjects was increased in Tibet which served Nepal, paid tax to Nepal but had no socio-economic or political claim whatsoever upon Nepal. *Khachara* system tremendously contributed to expand Nepalese commerce and influence in Tibet. But the whole *Khachara* concept lacked moral concern, social commitment and economic accountability on part of Nepalese government. On the other hand *Khacharas* being socially economically as well as politically burdensome to Tibetan government were the subject of their hatred and jealousy. Disdained by both Tibet and Nepal the *Khacharas* were morally and psychologically unattached to both Tibet and Nepal. Some share in paternal property, little concern and timely reforms by Nepal would have earned their respect, loyalty and bondage. But for centuries Nepal neglected their economic security, social status and political aspirations. So when offered alternative they preferred to adopt Chinese citizenship. For centuries *Khachara* system had influenced not only the diplomatic intercourse but also the commercial relation with Nepal. Nonetheless at last it ended rather abruptly.

Notes

1. For the clauses of these treaties, see Leo E. Rose, *Nepal: Strategy for Survival* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 43; 64-65; 114-115.
2. Chandra Shumshere to Lal Bahadur Basnet, B.S. 1970 Bhadra 18 (September 1913), Poka No. 90, Foreign Ministry Archives of Nepal.

3. *Lhasako Dastur Kitap*, Foreign Ministry Archives of Nepal.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Commandari Kitabkhana Record*, B.S. 1960-1980, National Archives of Nepal.
6. Petition of Jit Bahadur from Lhasa, B.S. 1971, Srawan 14 (July 1914), Foreign Ministry Archives of Nepal, Poka No. 206.
7. *ibid.*
8. The information furnished by Nepalese envoy Jit Bahadur regarding the secret alliance between Tibet and Russia proved wrong. For detail, see Mishra, *op.cit.*, f.n. 10, pp. 67-87.
9. *Lhasa ko Dastur Kitap*, *op.cit.*, f.n. 8.
10. For the Phari route trade crisis, see Mishra, *op.cit.*, f.n. 10, pp. 230-239.
11. *Lhasako Dastur Kitap*, *op.cit.*, f.n. 8
12. The Nepalese half-breed named Aane was expelled from the house of a Tibetan without proper ground, Lal Bahadur to Chandra Shumshere, B.S. 1969 Falgun 3 (February 1913), Poka No. 80, Foreign Ministry Archives of Nepal.
13. Nepal, *op.cit.*, f.n.6, p. 224.
14. *ibid.*
15. Mishra, *op.cit.*, f.n. 10, pp. 203-04.
16. For the Phari route trade crisis, See Mishra, *op.cit.*, f.n. 10, pp. 230-239.
17. The Chinese highhandedness ove the Nepalese in Tibet is analysed in Mishra, *op.cit.*, f.n. 10, pp. 134-38.
18. *ibid.*
19. Order of Chandra Shumshere to the Nepalese Vakil at Lhasa, B.S. 1968, Kartik 11 (November 1911), Poka No. 88, Foreign Ministry Archives of Nepal.
20. Lhasa ko Dastur Kitap, *op.cit.*, n.f. 8.
21. *ibid.*
22. *Lhasa ko Dastur Kitap*, *op.cit.*, f.n. 8
23. *ibid.*
24. Petition of Jit Bahadur, B.S. 1968, Magh 3 (January 1912), Poka No. 55, Foreign Ministry Archives of Nepal.
25. Khanal , *op.cit.*, f.n. 23, p. 4.

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ETHNOBOTANICAL NOTES ON THANGMI PLANT NAMES AND THEIR MEDICINAL AND RITUAL USES

Mark Turin

Introduction

Over the past six years, in the course of documenting the grammar of the Thangmi language, I have found the lexicon to be replete with indigenous names for local flora and fauna. Many of these indigenous terms are falling into disuse, or being replaced by Nepali words as fluency in the national language increases. Older Thangmi speakers have encouraged me to document the local botanical terminology, and the medicinal and ritual uses of the plants as a record for younger generations of Thangmi speakers as well as for the international scholarly community. With this goal in mind, the present article offers a list of Thangmi lexical items for flora.

Since I am untrained in ethnobotany and taxonomy, the vernacular English terms and Latin names which I have included may in some cases be incorrect and I am unable to ensure accuracy. However, I have cross-checked each term and its associated ritual or medicinal uses with at least three native speakers of Thangmi, and the Nepali and Latin names for plants, alongside the common vernacular English terms, are always provided when known. The list has been ordered according to a modified Roman alphabetical ordering, with aspirates such as /kh/ and /th/ following the unaspirated series. After each Thangmi term, (D) for Dolakhā and/or (S) for Sindhupālcok are shown to indicate the Thangmi speech variety in which the word is attested. While many botanical terms are common to both dialects, some terms are noticeably different.

A note on the Thangmi language and its speakers

The Thangmi language is spoken by an ethnic group of the same name, known as *Thāmī* in Nepali, who live primarily in the districts of Dolakhā and Sindhupālcok in eastern Nepal. According to the last population census taken in 2001, Nepal is home to 18,991 mother tongue Thangmi speakers and 22,999 ethnic Thangmi. For a variety of reasons, which I have discussed elsewhere at greater length (Turin 2000), I believe these population statistics

to be a considerable underestimate. I place the total ethnic Thangmi population closer to 30,000 in Nepal, with another 5,000 or so in Darjeeling and Sikkim in India. While the genetic position of the Thangmi language is not the substance of this article, it may interest readers to know that Thangmi shows a certain affinity with the Kiranti languages spoken in eastern Nepal, particularly with regard to the complex and pronominalised verbal agreement system (see Turin 1998 for further details). Furthermore, there are striking similarities between the lexicons of Thangmi and Classical Newar, and while the status of these lexical isoglosses is not clear, they are discussed in greater length in Turin (in press).

Ethnobotanical research on the Tibeto-Burman languages of Nepal

For over 50 years, scholars have been documenting the flora of Nepal. These writings offer a mine of important information pertaining to the ethnobotanical and indigenous medicinal systems of Nepal's ethnic communities. A number of excellent compilations and books are available in Kathmandu bookshops which offer comparative lexical lists (see Rajbhandari 2001), formatted databases and extensive bibliographies of Himalayan ethnobotany. Many of the earliest, and now seminal, articles on Nepalese ethnobotany, including inventories of botanical terminology in specific Tibeto-Burman languages, have been published in the pages of this journal (see Bhattarai 1989 and 1991, Manandhar 1993 and 1998, and Shrestha 1985 and 1988), along with substantial contributions in *Kailash*, the *Journal of the Natural History Museum* (Nepal), and the *Journal of the Nepal Research Centre*. In keeping with this tradition, it seems fitting to publish this preliminary Thangmi botanical word list in *Contributions to Nepalese Studies* and thereby add to the corpus of knowledge available to scholars both in and of Nepal.

Thangmi plant names and their uses

adhai ~ adai (D) & (S)

Nepali *kdkro*

cucumber, *Cucumis sativus*

The fruit is edible both raw and cooked. The older fruits are traditionally cooked as a vegetable curry or preserved as a pickle. When consumed raw, cucumbers are believed to protect against jaundice and to counteract the negative effects of smoking. Ritual uses are limited to the Hindu festival of *tij*, during which it is auspicious if a cucumber is the first solid food consumed after the conclusion of the fast.

ahel (D) ~ syuŋŋan (S)

Nepali *dabdabe*

garuga, *Garuga pinnata*; *Lannea coromandelica*

The only use is as fodder for domesticated animals.

akal (D) ~ cyolampi (S)

Nepali *seto kāulo*

a species of tree, *Persea odoratissima*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals while the bark is used to flavour *sel roŋ* and as a red dye. The wood of the trunk is burned as firewood, and the better sections are used in house construction and for furniture.

akan (D) & (S)

Nepali *jau*

barley, *Hordeum vulgare*

This hard grain is made into flat breads or a porridge-like substance. The ritual uses of barley include the cleansing of polluted spaces in marriage and death ceremonies, during which the grains are burned in the fire to frighten away evil spirits. Barley stalks are used as thatch on roofs and are also collected as fodder for domesticated animals. If the auspicious day of *sombāre aūsī* falls within the month of *pus*, then balls of barley flour mixed together with water and cow's milk are taken to the nearest river and thrown in. This offering is believed to bring peace to the spirits of the dead.

akyarak (D)

Nepali *bāko*

the bulb of an arum lily, *Arum campanulatum*

The inside of the bulb is eaten as a polenta-like paste in times of hardship, after being peeled, dried, beaten and cooked. The 'eyes' or new sprouts of the bulb are poisonous to humans if consumed, as are the seeds,

akhyak (D)

Nepali *bhus*

barley and wheat inflorescence

The inflorescence is fed as fodder to cows in the months of *cait* and *baisakh*.

altak (D) ~ paṭareṇ (S)

Nepali *lāligurās*

the Nepalese rhododendron tree, *Rhododendron arboreum*

In the winter months, the fresh leaves make good fodder, but when the flowers are in bloom, the leaves are poisonous to animals. The wood of the trunk can be burned as firewood or used for furniture and house beams. If the flower is consumed by someone choking on a fish or chicken bone, the petals are believed to remove the obstruction and help the swallowing reflex.

kiji altak (D)

Nepali *kālo gurās*

the black rhododendron, *Rhododendron grande*

See above under *altak* for uses.

amum (D) ~ amom (S)

Nepali *cyāu*

mushroom

bāgālya amum (D)

Nepali *chāte cyāu*

This mushroom is cooked and consumed as a vegetable curry. It ripens in the months of *aśār* and *bhadau*.

ciripiṭik amum (D)

Nepali *chālā cyāu*, *paṭpaṭe cyāu*

a species of edible mushroom, *Flammulina velutipes*

This chewy mushroom is cooked and consumed as a vegetable curry or preserved as a chutney. It ripens in the month of *sāun*.

kiji amum (D) ~ kiji amom (S)

Nepali *kālo khāne cyāu*

honey fungus, *Armillariella mellea*

This mushroom is cooked and consumed as a vegetable curry. It ripens in the months of *sāun* and *bhadau*.

kulla amum (D)

Nepali *kān cyāu*

This mushroom is cooked and consumed as a vegetable curry. It ripens in the month of *bhadau*.

nipis amum (D)

Nepali *kān cyāu*

This mushroom is cooked and consumed as a vegetable curry. It ripens in the months of *asār* and *bhadau*.

nunu amum (D)

Nepali *dudh cyāu*

This mushroom is cooked and consumed as a vegetable curry. It ripens in the month of *bhadau*.

arka (D) & (S)

Nepali *okhar*

walnut, *Juglans regia*

The nut can be eaten raw. The outside shell gives off a black dye when beaten, and this is used to paint house doors. The bark of the tree trunk as well as the leaves are used as a poison to stun fish, for which the preparation is as follows: the bark is stripped off and leaves collected, these are then beaten and little pieces are thrown in the water where fish are known to swim. The substance in the bark temporarily stuns the fish after which they float to the surface and can be collected. The poison does not affect humans and consumption is thus safe. The trunk of the tree is used for timber and household furniture, while smaller pieces are burned as firewood. At *bhāi tika* during the Hindu festival of *tihār*, women place walnuts in the doorways of houses. When cracked, these are believed to kill local demons.

aṇeṇ (D) & (S)

Nepali *harkaulo*

The leaves are collected as fodder for several domesticated animals, and the small red nut is roasted and peeled to be eaten as a snack. The trunk is used in furniture construction on account of its strength.

asip (D) & (S)

Nepali *ghurmiso*, *ghurbaṭso*

The leaves are collected as fodder for cows and goats. The timber is used for making traditional bee hives, since bees are partial to this wood. The flowers, which blossom in the month of *cait*, secrete a sweet juice and are eaten.

au (D) [ritual language]

Nepali *āp*

mango, *Mangifera sylvatica*; *Mangifera indica*

The fruit is consumed, and the wood is used as timber.

awakdu calak (D) & (S)

Nepali *tite gītthā*

bitter air yam, *Dioscorea bulbifera*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals. The bulb, which grows underground, is boiled in water, peeled and eaten as a snack in the month of *māgh*. The fruit, which ripens in the months of *kārtik* and *māsir*, can also be boiled and eaten.

bāgale (D) ~ rise (S)

Nepali *bilāunt*

a species of tree, *Maesa chisia*; *Maesa indica*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals.

bārma (D) ~ barma (S)

Nepali *amriso*, *amliso*

bouquet grass, *Thysanolaena agrestis*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, but are more commonly used to make brooms. During wedding rituals and *pujas* for newly constructed houses, individual stalks of bouquet grass are placed in various locations around the house to create an auspicious environment. The plant also has medicinal uses for women during labour or childbirth: when a baby has been born but the placenta is not forthcoming, then bouquet grass roots are tied together, along with a copper coin, and placed in the woman's navel. This is believed to expedite the expulsion of the placenta. If the leaves are eaten by either animals or humans during pregnancy, then the foetus will likely be aborted. This characteristic is also shared by the *melunpan* discussed below.

bagale (D) ~ bagalya (S)

Nepali *āru*

peach, *Prunus persica*

The edible fruit ripens in the month of *bhadau* and is consumed raw. The wood from the trunk is used to make furniture while the chippings are burned as firewood.

bajareṅ (D) ~ awa (S)

Nepali *kācopāt, surtī*

locally-grown tobacco, *Nicotiana tabacum*

The old leaves, after being dried in the sun and crumbled, are rolled into *āgerī* or *sāl* (*Shorea robusta*) leaves, and smoked as cigarettes. The leaves have a medicinal quality when beaten, mixed with water, and smeared over a goat's body. This concoction is believed to combat infestations of lice or fleas. If insects are consuming or destroying spinach or other leafy greens, then this same mixture of beaten leaves and water can be used as an effective pesticide. The leaves are also used for rituals: when curing a case of possession, Thangmi shamans place hot coals on a large *bajareṅ* leaf. Millet flour is then sprinkled on top of the coals, attracting the spirit and burning it on the coals. The polluted leaf-plate is then taken to a fork in the path and left there, so that the spirit will be unable to find its way back.

baldane (D) ~ bandalek (S)

Nepali *ṭoḷalā*

a species of tree, *Oroxylum indicum*

In every Thangmi ritual and in each house, there must be at least one dried *baldane* fruit. The plant does not grow in the Thangmi-speaking area and must therefore be brought from the Terai. The seeds also have a medicinal use when finely beaten, mixed with water, and strained. This concoction is fed to patients suffering from a high fever or pneumonia, and is believed to help restore health or bring down the fever. The Thangmi ritual word for this species in the Dolakhā dialect is *darjum*.

bân kwai (D) ~ ruṅ kawi (S)

Nepali *ban tarul*

potato yam, *Dioscorea bulbifera*

The bulb is edible after being boiled and peeled, and the creeper has a flower which can be eaten in a similar manner. When eaten raw, the bulb can help reduce throat pain. The leaves are collected as fodder and fed to domesticated animals. On *māghe sākrānti*, after an early morning ritual at the nearest water source, a *ṭikā* is made from raw *bân kwai* and placed on the forehead of attendees.

benā (D)

Nepali *khasru*

brown oak of the Himalaya, *Quercus semecarpifolia*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the tree trunk is used to make furniture, doors and windows. The chippings are

burned in the household fire. The resin from the tree is collected and can be drunk as a medicinal infusion for stomach ache.

bephuṅ (D) & (S)

Nepali *ghurmiso*, *ghurbaṭṭso*

The leaves are collected as fodder for cows and goats, and the timber is used for making traditional bee hives. The flowers, which blossom in *cait*, secrete a juice which makes them sweet and edible.

bok (D) ~ bo? (S)

Nepali *makai-ko phul*, *dhāncamarā*

top of the maize or rice inflorescence, *Zea mays* and *Oryza sativa*

The blossoms are collected as fodder for cows and goats. The flowers are visited by bees.

bosiṅ (D) ~ busiṅ (S)

Nepali *uttis*

alder, Nepal black cedar, *Alnus nepalensis*

The wood is used for furniture and household construction and also for making beehives. The leaves, while not eaten by animals, are collected and used as fertiliser in small-scale cardamom cultivation.

bottle (D)

Nepali *harkaṭo*

a species of fodder

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals.

brusiṅ (D) ~ bhere (S)

Nepali *paṭyā*

the wild cherry tree, *Prunus puddum*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the tree trunk is used to make furniture, doors and windows. The chippings are burned in the household fire. Straight *brusiṅ* branches are used during the Thangmi wedding ritual to support the bamboo canopy or marquee.

buṅ (D) ~ ame? (S)

Nepali *dhāncamarāko mātīṭ*, *parāṅ*

inflorescence at the top of the maize or rice blossom

Other than for bees, who collect the nectar, the inflorescence has no use.

bhâmbâla (D) ~ cyokre (S)

Nepali *culetro*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals.

cânge (D) ~ cângya (S)

Nepali *lathē sāg*

pigweed, *Amaranthus viridis*; *Amaranthus albus*

The green leaves are prepared and eaten as a vegetable curry, and are believed to help cure diarrhoea. The seeds of the flower are ground into a powder and mixed with water, and are taken as an infusion to help with general 'gastric' problems. The seeds can also be beaten and fried in clarified butter and fed to pregnant women to lessen pregnancy pains.

calak (D) ~ cala? (S)

Nepali *gūthā*

air potato, *Dioscorea bulbifera*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals. The bulb can be consumed when boiled and skinned, but the thicker veins must be removed since they are too chewy to be eaten. The creepers have a blossom which can also be eaten when boiled.

calou (D) & (S)

Nepali *ban sisnu*

Himalayan nettle, *Girardinia diversifolia*

The very top bud is edible when prepared as a vegetable curry. The stems are beaten, dried and boiled to make a thread which is then woven into traditional nettle clothing. The spines of the Himalayan nettle are believed to stimulate milk production. If cows and buffaloes are not lactating, they are believed to be possessed and are then beaten with the nettles to make them lactate. Thangmi shamans also beat humans possessed by evil spirits with these wild nettles in the belief that this will end the possession. The Himalayan nettle should not be touched or eaten by family members of a deceased person on the day of death. If the deceased is one's mother or father, this prohibition remains in place for a whole year. See also *nañai* for further information.

caltak (D) ~ calda (S)

Nepali *sothar*

male shield fern, *Dryopteris filix-mas*

or edible fern shoot, *Dryopteris cochleata*

This is used as soft padding for livestock pens, and functions as a natural blanket or mattress. When dirty, it is spread on maize fields as fertiliser.

camek (D) ~ came? (S)

Nepali *māliṅgo*, *coyā*

red Himalayan bamboo, *Thamnocalamus spathiflorus*

or tufted bamboo, *Dendrocalamus hamiltoni*

The primary use is for making bamboo household articles such as baskets and mats, but it is also used in furniture construction. The small bamboo shoots can be eaten as a vegetable curry, and the leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals. It can also be used as a rope to tie or bundle things together. Bamboo has multiple ritual uses in Thangmi culture, for example as the flagpole for a shaman's banner in most rituals, and in the construction of various articles to send the deceased to heaven in the Thangmi death ritual. If bamboo leaves are fed to lactating cows and buffaloes, their milk is believed to dry up very quickly. The fodder is therefore only given to male bovines or old females. See also *liṅliṅ*.

kiji camek (D) ~ kiji came? (S)

Nepali *kālo nigālo*

small mountain bamboo, *Arundinaria intermedia*

See above under *camek* for its uses.

caṅ (D) & (S)

Nepali *sallā*

the chir pine, Himalayan long leaved pine, *Pinus roxburghii*

The wood is excellent for furniture construction, while the kindling or smaller branches are used as flaming torches to light the way at night. Resin is released from the incisions where branches are cut, and this can be tapped and used as fuel. When dried, the cone at the end of the branches can also be turned into a flaming torch since it is very flammable. This cone exudes a sticky substance which is also used as a glue to bind things together. The wood is also burned during exorcism rituals. During various Thangmi rituals, the flaming torches must be made from *caṅ*.

carcare ~ cârcâre (D) & (S)

Nepali *pānt-laharā*

the red-fruited bramble, *Rubus moluccanus*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals. The stems are used to make string or rope to bind things together, particularly to attach

livestock to their stakes. The rope is strong enough to be used to pull heavy items, such as in the construction of wooden bridges.

catik (D) ~ (S)

Nepali *sirīṣ*

the parrot tree, East Indian walnut, *Albizia lebbek*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the trunk is burned as firewood.

ce (D) ~ ce? (S)

Nepali *kaṭus*, *dhālne kaṭus*

the Nepal or Indian chestnut tree, *Castanopsis hystrix*; *Castanopsis indica*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the trunk is used for furniture construction. The smaller chippings are burned as firewood. The nuts are roasted and eaten as snacks, and the smallest leaves are boiled in water to make ink. During the Thangmi death ritual, shamans use branches of the chestnut tree to kill evil spirits. Leafy branches are dipped in boiling water and used to beat the possessed person (who must be naked for the cure to be efficacious) during Thangmi exorcism rituals.

cile (D) & (S)

Nepali *bhyākur*

cush-cush, yam, *Dioscorea deltoidea*, *Dioscorea trifida*

The bulb and fruit which grow on the creeper are edible when peeled and boiled.

cyala (S)

Nepali *ṭunā ṭunī*

Cedrela tree, Moulmein tree, *Toona ciliata*

The trunk is used as firewood.

cyothrok (D)

Nepali *cutro*

a species of barberry bush, common barberry, *Berberis asiatica*; *Berberis nepalensis*

This bush is primarily used for fencing on account of its sizeable thorns. In the month of *baiśākh*, a small red fruit ripens which can be eaten raw.

cyurkusuna (D)

Nepali name unknown

a species of grass

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals. The shrub is strung up in the groom's house the night before a wedding to ensure that the couple have a long and prosperous life together.

dolgareŋ (D) ~ dalkhareŋ (S)

Nepali *sunākhari*

epiphytic orchid

This plant is used in Thangmi *bhume puja* rituals. The flower is placed on top of a wheat flour offering.

dokmaŋ (D) ~ doʔmaŋ (S)

Nepali *ṭimur*

Nepal pepper, prickly ash, *Zanthoxylum armatum*

Nepal pepper is primarily used as a spice in cooking, particularly in vegetable curry. It can also provide a substitute for lentil soup, eaten with millet or maize paste. The seeds are collected, dried and consumed as a medicine to help ease the pain of stomach aches and 'gastric' problems. If a close relative dies, family members are prohibited from eating *dokmaŋ* for six months for ritual reasons. The dried and beaten seeds also function as an effective pesticide against small insects when spread liberally around the base of wheat plants. When made into a liquid paste together with *uireŋ* leaves, *dokmaŋ* seeds are an effective weapon against termites and other insects which eat through wood. This paste is applied to wooden house beams or furniture where the wood is eroded by insects. The concoction is believed to emit an odour which is disliked by insects.

domba (D)

Nepali *rukḥ*

The general Thangmi word for tree.

dosken (D) ~ phulu (S)

Nepali *ninro, niguro, niuro*

the fern, *Gleichenia linearis*; or the edible fern shoot, *Dryopteris cochleata*

The fern shoots are edible when cooked as a vegetable curry in the months of *bhadau* and *asoḥ*. When boiled with salt and eaten, the plant has a powerful medicinal use in combating diarrhoea with blood in the stool.

dhapre (D)

Nepali *ghiukumārī*

Indian aloe, *Aloe vera* (*Aloe barbadensis*)

The gum which is released when the leaves are broken in half is used as a medicinal ointment applied to burns and scalds. Aloe is known to have strong healing powers.

ḍiṇḍiṇ ileṇ (D)

Nepali *rāto aīselu*

a type of red raspberry, *Rubus pentagonus*

The fruits ripen in the months of *phāgun* or *cait*, and are delicious when eaten raw. The roots of the shrub are beaten for use in the preparation of local beer. The stalks of the shrub are used to construct fences around vegetable gardens due to their sharp thorns. During the Thangmi death ritual, after the corpse has been burned, the mourners must block the path on their way back home to stop the spirit of the deceased returning to its village. This symbolic blockage takes the form of a fire lit with flint stones and inflammable plant matter known in Nepali as *julo*. The thorny branches of the *ḍiṇḍiṇ ileṇ* are placed atop this fire, and as the mourners back away, they wave their caps over the flaming pile to take leave of the spirit.

ḍoṇḍoṇ (D)

Nepali *bās-ko khapaṭā*

The lower leaves or outer covering of the bamboo plant, which fan out at the base of the stem.

ḍoṇṭhya (D) ~ botton (S)

Nepali *bhālu niṅgro*

a species of thorny bamboo, *Bambusa arundinacea*

The large leaves of this plant are used to cover newly sown or broadcast seeds so that birds and other pests do not eat them.

ḍumla (D)

Nepali *nebhāro*

common fig, *Ficus carica*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the wood of the trunk is burned as firewood. The 'fruit' ripens between *asār* and *bhādau* and is eaten raw. The large leaves are pinned together to make disposable plates for weddings and other local feasts.

elepe ~ helekpa (D)

Nepali *hathale*

curly dock, common field sorrel, *Rumex crispus*; *Rumex nepalensis*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and can also be cooked and made into vegetable curry for human consumption.

goṭhe paṇ (D) ~ raʔaduca paṇ (S)

Nepali *cart amilo*

Indian sorrel, creeping sorrel, *Oxalis corniculata*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the wood of the trunk is burned as firewood. The fruit ripens between *māsir* and *māgh* and is eaten raw. The fresh fruit is also consumed as a medicine to lessen throat pain.

gunjilik (D) ~ gujili? (S)

Nepali *kuro*

a species of sharp-pointed spear-grass, *Triumfetta pilosa*

When green, the leaves are collected as fodder for goats.

kiji gunjilik (D)

Nepali *kālo kuro*

Beggar tick, *Bidens pilosa*

When green, the leaves are collected as fodder for goats.

hâkuṇap ~ kiji ileṇ (D)

Nepali *kālo aiselu-ko boṭ*

the black raspberry, *Rubus foliolosus*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, while the woody older stems are burned as firewood. The fruit ripens between *baisākh* and *asār* and can be eaten raw as a medicine for diarrhoea. The stem is twisted into rope for securing domesticated livestock to their stakes and for attaching oxen during ploughing. The stem is also used as rope to stretch a goat skin in the construction of drums.

ilame (D)

Nepali *cheruvā jhār*

a species of fodder, *Lindenbergia indicia*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals. Thangmi villagers use this plant as a natural clock since it stands up high in the daytime and wilts in the evening.

ileṇ (D) ~ ilyaṇ (Ś)

Nepali *aiselu*

a species of edible berry, *Rubus lasiocarpus*

The thorny branches are used to make fences along property borders to stop animals entering or exiting. The fruits ripen between *cait* and *jeṭh* and can be eaten raw.

ine (S)

Nepali *rāto bākhre ghāś*

a species of weed, *Desmodium elegans*

The leaves are collected as fodder for goats.

jakcho (D) ~ ja?co (S)

Nepali *gahū*

wheat, *Triticum sativum*; *Triticum aestivum*

The leaves and stalks are collected as fodder for domesticated animals. The grain is harvested between *baisākh* and *jeṭh* and is made into grain paste or baked as a flat bread. The grains can also be roasted whole and made into a porridge for children. The dried stalks are used as thatch for roofs. Wheat breads are prepared during Thangmi rituals, particularly for marriage and death.

jake (D) & (S)

Nepali *cāmal*

uncooked rice, rice in general, *Oryza sativa*

The leaves and stalks are collected as fodder for domesticated animals. The rice grain is harvested between *kārtik* and *māsir*. The grains can also be roasted whole and made into porridge for children. The dried stalks are used as thatch for roofs. Some form of rice is used in most Thangmi rituals. Rice is a newer import and luxury food, and most Thangmi villagers do not own their own rice fields.

jumu (D) ~ dundup (S)

Nepali *jimbu*

Nepal aromatic leaf garlic, *Allium hypsistum*, *Allium wallichii*

This is used as a spice to flavour lentil soup.

jhumit (D)

no Nepali name available

a species of tree

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the trunk is burned as firewood.

kadhrap (D) ~ kyadrap (S) ~ konṭap (S)

Nepali *malāyo*

The leaves and stalks are collected as fodder for domesticated animals in the month of *māsir*, and the wood of the tree trunk is burned as firewood. The fruit ripens in *māsir* and is beaten, dried and then made into a chutney. The ripe fruit is useful as a medicine to combat diarrhoea, as an antidote to mushroom poisoning and to lessen the oral irritation caused by eating taro. The plant is also used to make wicker baskets and other goods, and is used by shamans to construct the outer part of their ritual drums. The shape of the branches can be altered using hot water or steam, making them suitable for the construction of items which require elasticity, such as the catapults or slingshots used by children to kill birds.

kamleko ṭhi (D) ~ klicyupui (S)

from Nepali *kāmle*

artillery plant, *Pilea symmeria*; *Pilea wightii*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals in the month of *sāun* and *bhadau*, and the wood of the tree trunk is burned as firewood.

kampe (D)

Nepali *gidro*

soft pith of bamboo

This is used exclusively for weaving bamboo baskets and other goods.

kanṭap (D)

Nepali *kāmro*

a chip of bamboo or splint of wood

These are used to make carrying baskets or cradles, and are secured to the outside of bamboo goods and wicker cots to strengthen them.

kapa (D) ~ kapa? (S)

Nepali *bās*

feathery bamboo, *Bambusa vulgare*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals. The small shoots are edible between *asār* and *bhadau*, and are cooked as a vegetable curry or made into chutney. The stronger stalks of bamboo are used as ceiling beams in house construction. Household articles and baskets are commonly made of feathery bamboo. Some roofs, huts and ladders are also made of this species of bamboo on account of its strength. Inside the old bamboo stalks there is a kind of white 'butter' which is an excellent ointment for burns. Inside young bamboo is a different kind of watery

substance which is fed to adults and children to stop bedwetting. Feathery bamboo is also used to construct the bier on which the deceased is carried to the cremation ground. This ritual bamboo structure is known as a *marəŋseŋ*. See also *rapa*.

karjek (D) ~ karce? (S)

Nepali *ukhu*

sugar cane, *Saccharum officinarum*

The sap is used as sugar to sweeten tea and is also consumed as a medicine against jaundice. During Thangmi wedding rituals, shamans burn small pieces of sugar cane in the fire along with rice.

kosaseŋ (D)

Nepali *kāli-kāth*

a species of tree, *Cephalanthus naucleoides*

The leaves are collected as fodder for goats. The wood of the trunk and that of larger branches is used to manufacture handles for domestic tools and is also used for furniture. Chippings are burned as firewood.

kunlareŋ ~ kullareŋ (D) & (S)

from Nepali *karnaphul*

a species of flower, *Stellaria vestita*

This flower is worn for beauty's sake only, and has no practical uses.

kwai (D) ~ bhoŋya? (S)

Nepali *ālu*

potato, *Solanum tuberosum*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the bulb is cooked and consumed as vegetable curry.

kwai ~ kwoi (D) & (S)

Nepali *tarul*

all root vegetables, and specifically *Dioscorea sagittata*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the bulb is consumed as a vegetable after being boiled and peeled. A certain red form should be eaten when suffering from diarrhoea, particularly if the stool is white or red with blood. On the Hindu festival of *māghe sākrānti*, after an early morning ritual at the nearest water source, a *ṭikā* is made from raw *kwai* and placed on the forehead of all attendees. It is believed to bring good luck if *kwai* is eaten before anything else on this morning.

khokorsokor (D)

Nepali *sukeko sāgpāt*

The edible dried leaves of any green vegetable.

muikwai (S)

Nepali *pustakārī*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the bulb is cooked, peeled and eaten.

nem kwai (D) ~ suṇḍaṇ (S)

from Nepali *ghar tarul*

white yam, *Dioscorea alata*

See above description for *kwai*.

kyañ (D) & (S)

Nepali *cilāune*

needle wood tree, *Schima wallichii*

The wood is used to make ploughs and furniture, and chippings are burned as firewood. The timber is excellent for house construction, however, so little is burned.

khoma (D)

Nepali *kodo-ko bhus*

the feathery inflorescence of the millet plant

This is collected as fodder for domesticated animals.

lakaṇe (D) & (S)

Nepali *mulā*

radish, *Raphanus sativus*

The root is eaten raw as a snack, and is also made into a pickle or chutney. Radish is believed to settle the stomach and to reduce gas when eaten raw. The leaves are eaten as a vegetable curry to help against jaundice. When picked and dried, the leaves have a medicinal function as a cure for headaches and fever during the monsoon months.

laca (D) ~ lasa (S)

Nepali *āgerī*

Indian rhododendron, *Melastoma melabatricum*; *Lyonia*, *Lyonia ovalifolia*

The tree trunk can be burned as firewood, and the leaves are used to roll local cigarettes made of *bajareṇ*. When beaten and mixed with cold water, the leaves are rubbed on the skin to reduce inflammations, irritations and

allergies. If the leaves are eaten by goats in the months of *phāgun* and *cait*, they may be poisonous and kill the animal. In such cases, however, the meat of the animal is not poisoned and may still be consumed by humans.

liki ~ likin (D)

Nepali *gahū-ko khar*, *chwāl̥t*

wheat stalks

Used to make thatch for house roofs.

liḡliḡ (D) ~ kiji came? (S)

Nepali (*kālo*) *nigālo*, *māliḡo*, *coyā* (*bās*)

red Himalayan bamboo, *Thamnocalamus spathiflorus*;

and small mountain bamboo, *Arundinaria intermedia*;

and tufted bamboo, *Dendrocalamus hamiltonii*

See the above description for *camek*.

loḡa (D) ~ jalat (S)

Nepali *lapsi*

Nepalese hog plum, *Choerospondias axillaris*

The leaves are collected as fodder for goats and the fruit is made into chutney. The trunk is used for furniture and burned as firewood. It is believed that if a person with a high fever eats *loḡa*, he or she will likely die.

luḡkupiḡ (D)

Nepali *kāḡiyo rukh*

silky oak, *Grevillea robusta*

The leaves are collected as fodder for all domesticated animals, and the trunk is used for furniture and burned as firewood.

lutum (D) & (S)

Nepali *gogan*

a species of tree, *Saurauia napaulensis*

The leaves are collected as fodder for all domesticated animals, and the trunk is burned as firewood. The fruit has a seed which is sucked for its sweet flavour.

marci (D)

Nepali *khorsāni*

red pepper, *Capsicum frutescens*

This spice is used in the preparation of most curries, and is also used to dis-attach leeches from the body and kill them. Thangmi shamans often use

marci in their rituals, both fresh and dried, to exorcise malevolent spirits affecting people or houses. In such rituals, *marci* is burned in the fire to give off an acrid and foul-smelling smoke.

usare maṇai (D) ~ maṇa usyare (S)

Nepali *marcā*

yeast, leaven, *Saccharomyces*

Literally meaning ‘medicine bread’, yeast is used in the fermentation process for making local beer and distilled spirit. It also plays an important role in Thangmi wedding and death rituals, often as a substitute for beer should none be available.

meluṅ (D) & (S)

Nepali *macheno*

white heather, *Gaultheria fragrantissima*

The leaves are collected as fodder for all domesticated animals, but only in the months between *kārthik* and *phāgun*. The fruit can be eaten raw and has a sweet flavour. The leaves are used as perfume and may help to relieve nasal blockages (as a local substitute for Vicks). Shamans use the leaves of the *meluṅ* in exorcism rituals for humans and cows, during which they are set alight and used to beat the body of the possessed individual.

meluṅpaṅ (D)

Nepali *bimiro*

the large wild lime, citron, *Citrus medica*

The trunk of the tree is burned as firewood, while the edible citrus fruit, which ripens between *bhadau* and *pus*, is eaten raw. The outside skin is sweet, and the inner flesh is sour. The fruit is worshipped during the Hindu festival of *tihar*. During the Thangmi wedding ritual, the very top of the tree is used to make a necklace for the groom, to whom it is presented on the night before the wedding by the attendant shaman. The plant also has a medicinal use during labour and birth: if the child has been born but the placenta is not forthcoming, then roots of this plant are tied together, along with a copper coin, and placed in the navel of the birthing woman. This is believed to expedite the expulsion of the placenta. Finally, if the leaves are eaten by animals or humans during pregnancy, the foetus will likely be aborted. In these uses, *meluṅpaṅ* resembles the *bārma* plant discussed above.

more (D)

Nepali *ban silām*
the shrub, *Perilla frutescens*

When the fresh leaves are rolled between the fingers, a small quantity of juice is released which is very effective in removing leeches from the body. *Chinik* is the name for a chutney made from the seeds. Once the seeds are black and have ripened, they are picked and ground. The chutney is often eaten with cucumber.

mote (D) & (S)

Nepali *bhaṁmās*
soya bean, *Glycine max*

The pulse can be eaten fresh or dried, either a roasted snack or in a curried preparation. During the Thangmi death ritual, the dried pulse is used to represent the eyes of the deceased.

mui (D) & (S)

Nepali *kerā*
banana, plantain, *Musa x paradisiaca*

The fruit is eaten raw and is used in many rituals by neighbouring Hindu castes. The leaves are used in a Thangmi ritual which precedes the marriage ceremony. When a patient is very ill, a shaman may slice a banana lengthways to give the person a chance of living a little longer. This ritual can also be used as a prophylactic measure against future or imminent disease. The sap released by the banana tree is believed to be a good remedy against fever and pneumonia, but only when drunk directly from the tree.

mus (D) ~ syaṇḍaṇ (S)

Nepali *makai-ko jūgā*
cornsilk, *Zea mays*

This is collected as fodder for all domesticated animals.

naṇai (D) & (S)

Nepali *allo sisnu*
Himalayan nettle, *Girardinia diversifolia*

The same plant as *calou*, but *naṇai* refers to the practical and ritual purposes and not its use as an edible foodstuff. See *calou* for further description.

nara (D) & (S)

Nepali *jarā*
The root of any plant.

nili (D)

Nepali *nibuva*

lemon, Otaheite orange, *Citrus limon*

The tree trunk is burned as firewood only once the tree is dead and dried out. The fruit is sour and is eaten raw, or made into chutney and preserved. The fruit has a medicinal function as an antidote to mushroom poisoning and also against oral irritations caused by eating taro. See also *paŋ*.

nunuŋhi (D) ~ nunuseŋ (S)

from Nepali *dudhilo*

the tree, *Ficus neriifolia*

Literally meaning 'milk fodder', this is the favourite fodder for most domesticated animals. The trunk is used as firewood, and only rarely for furniture. The fruit, which ripens in *bhadau*, is edible and has a sweet taste.

nuru (D)

Nepali *kaŋahar*

jackfruit, *Artocarpus heterophyllus*; or pineapple, *Ananas comosus*

An archaic term, rarely used in vernacular Thangmi. The plant does not grow in the Thangmi-speaking area, but the wood of jackfruit is known to be good for furniture.

nuruŋ (D)

Nepali *tort*

mustard seed, Indian rape seed, *Brassica rapa*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the young leaves are picked and prepared as vegetable curry for human consumption. The leaves can also be preserved as *gundruk*. The seeds release an oil which is pressed and extracted for cooking or burned as lamp fuel. The oil is also used for head and body massage, particularly for babies and young children. Mustard seeds are used in the Thangmi death ritual to scare away malevolent spirits, and are sprinkled, together with the pressed oil, on corpses to make them burn speedily during cremation. The oil is applied to bleeding wounds in the belief that this will precipitate healing and prevent infection. Before the heavy monsoon field work begins, both humans and oxen are fed large quantities of *nuruŋ* oil, honey and eggs to give them strength for the coming months.

nyakaŋeŋ (D) & (S)

Nepali *sisnu*

stinging nettle, *Urtica dioica*

The leaves are collected as fodder for all domesticated animals, both raw and cooked. When cooked in water and consumed as a soup, the nettle leaves are believed to stimulate lactation in buffaloes and cows. The flowers and leaves are eaten year round by humans as a vegetable curry or soup, and are known to contain many vitamins good for general health. While some Thangmi still make clothing from *nyakañeñ*, the fibre is not as strong as *calou*, so its main use is culinary. See also *calou*.

nyañcaldak (D) ~ calou (S)

Nepali *hāde unyau*, *sothar*

male shield fern, *Dryopteris filix-mas*

When the stalks are burned on millet fields, the ash makes a good fertiliser.

palka (D) & (S)

from Hindi *palak*, Nepali *sāg*

leafy greens, particularly of the Indian mustard plant, *Brassica juncea*

The word *palka* is used for the leaves of all edible green vegetables which can be eaten or preserved as *gundruk*. It is believed that consuming leafy green vegetable matter will lead to good muscular development due to the high level of vitamin content in the leaves.

pañ (D)

Nepali *amilo*

all sour fruits, such as lemons and limes

The tree trunk of these species can be burned as firewood, but only once the tree is dead and the trunk has dried out. The sour fruits are eaten fresh and raw, or made into chutney and preserved. The fruits also have a medicinal function as an antidote to mushroom poisoning and are believed to relieve the oral irritation caused by eating taro. See also *nili*.

paṭaya (D)

Nepali *soyā*

rice stalks once the paddy has been removed, *Oryza sativa*

The stalks are collected as fodder for all domesticated animals. When dry, the stalks are woven into long mats for sitting and sleeping on, known as *gundri* in Nepali. The dried stalks are further used as roof thatch for traditional houses. Cows may be afflicted by a bad fever in the monsoon months and become weak or be unable to move easily. If *paṭaya* are fed as fodder to these ill animals, they have a better chance of making a full and speedy recovery.

pakpak (D) ~ pa?pa? (S)

Nepali *buṅgo*

pod of the plantain

These pods have no medicinal, ritual or nutritional value.

puṭuṭampe (D)

Nepali *kāḍe cāp*

prickly apple, *Catesbaea spinosa*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the timber is used for making furniture. The chippings are burned as firewood.

puya (D)

Nepali *bṭu*, *biruvā*, *ṭusā*

The general Thangmi term for all seeds or plant shoots.

puyapasa (D) ~ puyapesa (S)

Nepali *bṛubijan*

The general Thangmi term for seeds and grains.

phaṅgaṇeṅ ~ phaṅṅaṇeṅ (D) ~ ya? (S)

Nepali *piṇḍālu*

giant taro, *Alocasia indicum*; co-co yam, *Colocasia esculenta*

The roots are edible if first boiled and peeled. The leaves are eaten as vegetable curry, both fresh and dried. When eaten fresh or cooked in water and made into a soup, the leaves and bulb are believed to stimulate lactation in buffaloes and cows. During the Thangmi death ritual, a *phaṅgaṇeṅ* is used to represent the head of the deceased in the reconstruction of the body. The ritual term is *ya ~ yak*.

phaṭu (D)

Nepali *pharsi*

pumpkin, summer or winter squash, marrow,

Cucurbita maxima; *Cucurbita pepo*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, but are also eaten by humans as a vegetable curry. The large fruit is also made into vegetable curry when it ripens between the months of *jeṭh* and *asoḷ*, and the dried seeds are eaten as a peanut-like snack. The fruit is believed to contain agents which help fight jaundice when eaten raw.

racya (D) & (S)

Nepali *dhān*

paddy, rice in the field, harvested but unhusked rice, *Oryza sativa*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the grain is the most cherished foodstuff among Thangmi villagers. Thangmi rituals invariably use rice in some form, raw, cooked or as flour, the uses of which are too numerous to list in the present article. See also *jake* and *paṭaya*.

rani ukkar (D) ~ ukkar (S)

Nepali *ban-ko bhyākur*

wild cush-cush, yam, *Dioscorea deltoidea*

The bulb is edible when peeled and boiled, as is the fruit which grows on the creeper.

rapa (D)

Nepali *tāme bās, tāmā bās*

long bamboo, feathery or tufted bamboo, *Bambusa tulda, Bambusa vulgaris*

See *kapa*.

rapacamek (D)

Nepali *coyā bās*

tufted bamboo, *Dendrocalamus hamiltonii*

See *kapa*.

raphai (D)

Nepali *kāphal*

wild strawberry, *Fragaria vesca*

The tree trunk is used for furniture and firewood, and the 'fruit' which ripens between *cait* and *baisākh* is eaten raw. The tree bark, when peeled off, beaten and mixed with water, has a black colour and is used to paint doors and houses. The ripe 'fruit' has medicinal properties for patients suffering from diarrhoea with blood in the stool. It is also believed to cure general stomach infections.

rence (D) ~ renche (S)

Nepali *dāl, sīmī*

beans, pulses, *Lablab purpureus (Dolichos lablab)*

The general Thangmi term for beans and pulses of all kinds. The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the dried fruits are cooked as a soup or vegetable curry. Pulses are believed to help stomach cramps when eaten as a soup.

reṅ ~ ryēṅ (D) & (S)

Nepali *phul*

The general Thangmi word for flower.

reṅ meseḱ (D) ~ ryēṅ-ko mese? (S)

Nepali *phul-ko ākhā*

The general Thangmi word for the tepals of a flower, likely a calque from Nepali.

rikhi (D)

Nepali *kābhro*

a species of tree, *Ficus lacor*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals and the wood is burned as firewood.

ruipaṅ ~ ragdu paṅ (D)

Nepali *bhakī amilo, bhakīmlo*

Chinese sumac, *Rhus javanica*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals and the wood is burned as firewood. The fruit, which ripens around the month of *pus*, can be eaten either raw or as a chutney. The cooked fruit is believed to work as a cure for a distended stomach or serious cramps, for which it is mixed together with water and a raw egg and is drunk down quickly in one go due to its very sour taste.

sabal (D)

Nepali *jhyāu*

corn spurrey, *Spergula arvensis*

There are two forms, one found on trees and one on rocks. The tree variety has no use, while the rock variety is applied to deep cuts or wounds for its healing and antiseptic qualities.

syoksyok (D) ~ syo?syo? (S)

Nepali *lokṭā*

Daphne bholua

This is used to make rope or string to secure livestock and the bark is used to make traditional paper. It is only with the advent of development projects and cottage industries that paper production has taken off. The stalks are used to weave sitting or sleeping mats (*gundri* in Nepali). The raw leaves are fed to baby goats suffering from fever or diarrhoea in the belief that these will cure illness.

saga ~ sāwā (D) & (S)

Nepali *kodo*

finger millet, *Eleusine coracana*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the grain is harvested and eaten by humans as a kind of paste. During the Thangmi death ritual, balls of millet flour, known as *ere* in Thangmi, are cooked and eaten by the officiating shaman and mourners. Pregnant women are fed millet paste in the belief that this will give them the necessary strength to deliver their baby and will produce a strong child.

sempher (D)

Nepali *besār*

turmeric, *Curcuma longa*; or Indian arrowroot, *Curcuma angustifolia*

The leaves are useless but the root is used to flavour curries and soups. The root is also boiled in hot water and drunk as an infusion to help ease throat pains, cold, coughs and fever. Turmeric should not be consumed by people with jaundice as it is believed to make their skin turn even more yellow.

sempir (D) ~ semper (S)

Nepali *aduvā*

ginger, *Zingiber officinale*

The leaves are useless but the root is used to flavour curries and soups. The root is also boiled in hot water and drunk as an infusion to help ease throat pains, cold and coughs.

sijigare (D) ~ sidigare (S)

Nepali *siūḍṭ*

prickly pear, *Opuntia monocantha*

The thorny bush is very effective as a fence to control animals' movements. The milk extracted from the stem is collected and used to stun (or even kill) fish in small bodies of water. This milk is a powerful poison which has an acidic quality that can burn the skin or even blind if brought into contact with the eyes. When suffering from a splinter which cannot be removed by hand or with tweezers because it has lodged too far under the skin, a small drop of prickly pear milk can make the wound heat up and disgorge the offending splinter. Moreover, a dab of this same milk can be used to dry up painful boils on the body. Thangmi villagers often cut a little piece of the prickly pear bush and place it on their roofs or above their doors to prevent attacks from malevolent spirits. It is also believed to protect humans from suffering from fainting spells. Thangmi shamans feed a very small amount of the milk to individuals who are bewitched because the poison will make

the spirit want to depart from the affected body.

sinlati (D) & (S)

Nepali *bhimsen pāte*

butterfly bush, *Buddleja (Buddleia) asiatica*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the trunk is burned as firewood. During Thangmi wedding rituals, the female relatives of the groom wear necklaces made of the white flower.

sisin (D)

Nepali *sāl*

Sal tree, *Shorea robusta*

The trunk is used for furniture and also burned as firewood. The large leaves are pinned together and used as disposable plates during festivals and rituals. The resin is burned as an incense because it releases a pleasant smell.

srai (D)

Nepali *jhiñānī* (D)

a species of small tree, *Eurya japonica*, also *Eurya symolocina*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the trunk is used for furniture and house construction. The chippings are burned as firewood.

sumuhu (D)

Nepali *suntala*

orange, *Citrus sinensis*; mandarin, tangerine, *Citrus reticulata*

An archaic term, rarely used in vernacular Thangmi. The trunk is burned as firewood when dead and dry, and the fruit is sweet and edible. The peel is eaten as a cure for tonsillitis and fever or headaches, although the fruit is not eaten at such times. The fruit is used by Hindus, but not in Thangmi rituals.

sunamre (D)

Nepali *phalāme kāḍa*

a species of tree with large spines, *Homalium napaulense*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the trunk is burned as firewood.

sunamre (D)

Nepali *hāḍe biṇe*

the tree, *Ilex dipyrena*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the trunk is burned as firewood. The fruit, when ripe and black, can be eaten raw as a sweet tasting snack.

suru (D)

Nepali *supāri*

betel nut, areca nut, *Areca catechu*

An archaic term, rarely used in vernacular Thangmi.

teṅseṅ (D) ~ teṅsiṅ (S)

Nepali *ban*

The general Thangmi word for a forest, jungle or dense woodland area.

toringya (D) ~ tory (S)

Nepali *ghirāulā*

serpent or snake gourd, *Trichosanthes cucumerina*

The fruit, which ripens between the months of *bhadau* and *kārtik*, can be cooked and eaten when small. When dried, the fruit acts as an excellent loofah-like scrubbing brush for washing the body or clothes.

tampe (D)

Nepali *cāp*

a species of the magnolia tree, *Magnolia campbelli*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals, and the trunk is the highest grade, most prized wood for furniture and house construction. It is also the preferred wood for bee hives since bees are attracted to it. The chippings are burned as firewood.

ṭiku paṅ (D) ~ uchu (S)

Nepali *kimbu*

mulberry, *Morus laevigata*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals and the wood is burned as firewood. The fruit, which ripens around the month of *pus*, is edible and can be eaten either raw or as chutney. The fruit is also believed to lessen throat infections and swellings when eaten raw.

ṭukusiṅ (D)

Nepali *lākurt*

a species of ash tree, *Fraxinus floribunda*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals and the wood is burned as firewood or sometimes made into furniture. Bees favour the

nectar of these flowers above other nectar, and even humans are known to like its taste.

ṭhare

Nepali *jhar*

The general word for weeds or tufts of grass.

kiji ṭhare (D)

from Nepali *kālī jhār*

crofton weed, *Eupatorium adenophorum*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals.

lelep ṭhare (D)

Nepali *khole jhār*

a species of plant, *Lecanthus peduncularis*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals. This species grows in and around marshes or bogs.

namdu ṭhare (D) ~ namdu chyare (S)

from Nepali *ganāune jhār*

goat weed, *Ageratum conyzoides*

The strong-smelling leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals.

ragdu ṭhare (D) ~ icidu chyare (S)

Nepali *abijālo*

a species of small annual plant, *Drymaria cordata*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals. This species commonly grows as a weed among tea bushes. This plant has a medicinal function when beaten, cooked with water, strained and consumed: it is believed to ease the pain of sore throats, fevers and headaches.

ṭhi

Nepali *ghās*

The general Thangmi word for fodder.

ubhokḥaṭi

Nepali *gāṭihāre phul*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals. The leaves, when beaten and strained through water, can help cure a fever, although their flavour is very bitter.

uireq (D)

Nepali *titepāt*

mugwort, *Artemisia vulgaris*

The leaves are collected and burned fresh as incense. They are also an essential component of Thangmi rituals, particularly used to purify ritual space and the human body. If a Thangmi individual becomes ritually polluted by drinking someone else's beer, then consuming a few fresh leaves of mugwort will help to restore ritual purity. Thangmi shamans may eat mugwort leaves to purify themselves before major rituals. When eaten or rubbed on the body, the leaves are believed to protect against allergic reactions on the skin. The leaves also function as a pesticide when beaten and mixed with water to create an infusion which is then sprinkled on wooden furniture or household structures infested with termites or other wood-eating insects to make them disperse. The same infusion works as a pesticide when poured onto the freshly sown or early sprouting wheat seedlings.

ukkar (D)

Nepali *ban-ko bhyākur*

wild cush-cush, yam, *Dioscorea deltoidea*

The bitter-tasting bulb is edible when peeled and boiled, as is the fruit which grows on the creeper.

umak (D)

Nepali *ambā*

guava, *Psidium guajava*

An archaic term, rarely used in vernacular Thangmi. The fruit, which ripens between the months of *bhadau* and *māsir*, can be eaten raw. The trunk of the tree is burned for firewood. The tree bark is collected, pounded into dust, added to hot water and then drunk as the best local medicine against dysentery with blood in the stool.

uskol (D) ~ oskol (S)

Nepali *bhalāyo*

marking nut, *Semecarpus anacardium*;

cashew nut, *Semecarpus occidentale*

The leaves are collected as fodder for domesticated animals and the trunk is burned as firewood. Its primary use is in the purification ritual for a new house or settlement, during which the officiating shaman prepares seven stakes of this wood, placing one in each corner of the house, one by the door, one in the courtyard and one at the nearest fork in the road. These

stakes are believed to keep the ghosts and evil spirits at bay. Furthermore, when the milk of cows or buffaloes has turned or is no longer tasty, the milch animals are said to be possessed. The seeds of these two nut species are added to the milk to restore its taste, and to mark the departure of the possessing spirits. Livestock possession can also be counteracted by burning the seeds as incense, since the smoke is believed to chase spirits away. Should the resin of the tree come into contact with the human body, a strong allergic reaction occurs which burns the skin. This swelling and the associated pain can be reduced by applying goat milk.

wacareṇ (D)

from Nepali *ban kerā-ko phūl*

The resin which is released when the fruit is broken in two is sticky and is used as an adhesive to bind things together. The only use for the flower is during the Thangmi *bhume puḷā*, at which time it is placed on top of the wheat flour effigy which dominates the ritual.

wala (D)

Nepali *ṭhūlo pāt*

any large leaf

warewasan (S)

Nepali *phalphūl*

all fruit

yurkunsuna (D)

Nepali, Latin and vernacular English terms unknown.

a species of shrub of which the flower is used during Thangmi wedding rituals.

Conclusion

As the above list amply demonstrates, indigenous Thangmi ethnobotanical understanding is extensive and sophisticated. Many of these plants are still used medicinally in preference to Western bio-medicine. The sheer volume of Thangmi lexical terms for plant species outweighs any other discrete class of nouns which I have collected in my Thangmi-Nepali-English glossary. I hope that botanists and scholars of natural science will be able to use this list, together with the countless others that exist for the languages and cultures of Nepal, to develop a comparative and coherent understanding of the ethnobotanical knowledge of Himalayan peoples.

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IN THE WAKE OF COMMERCIALISED ENTERTAINMENT: AN INQUIRY INTO THE STATE OF MASKED DANCE-DRAMAS IN THE KATHMANDU VALLEY¹

Marianna Kropf

Manifestations of goddess circles within the Kathmandu Valley are manifold. Most influential for their development and conception were locally shaped traditions flourishing within the Newar community. The goddesses, generally addressed as *māṭrkā/māi* (Nep. 'mother') or *ajimā* (New. 'grandmother'), are present with their divine entourage in temples; they may additionally have their interrelated *pīṭhas* (Skt./Nep. 'seats') outside the boundaries of human settlements.

Newar towns are protected by a circle of *māṭrkās*, all conceived as fierce and ferocious emanations of the divine feminine. For their yearly festivals these goddesses are invoked into their procession images (*utsava-mūrti*) and installed on a wooden *ratha* (Skt./Nep. 'chariot') or a *kaṭh* (wooden litter) to be taken around and worshipped.

In some Newar towns and villages the *māṭrkās* further emanate in human form. Troupes of divine dancers, whose bodies serve as vessels (*pātra*) for the respective deities, appear with their own faces replaced by divine ones – the corresponding masks. Their dresses and other attire, their gestures (*mudrā*) and their movements express key features of the deity embodied. Traditional rhythms and tunes produced by an ensemble of instruments and human voices add to the uniqueness of these divine performances. Each one of the *gaṇpyākhah* (New. 'dance-drama/performance of a divine troupe') is seen to rely on its specific context, history and myths. Nevertheless they share some features, underlying concepts and structures which distinguish them from other genres of traditional dance or drama. The integrated ritual corpus is saturated with tantric elements – the dance-drama itself being but

another facet of ritual performance². The conception of the body serving as a temporary receptacle of the deity for worship is immanent to tantric practice. But whereas the practitioner mentally invokes the chosen deity in private by specific techniques³, the masked dancers target a public; interaction with the audience is, to various extents, part of the performance. Every dance troupe follows a specific yearly and/or twelve-year cycle. Further prescribed by tradition are the actual localities chosen for performance; they are restricted to places within one village or encompassing wider circles, including neighbouring villages and the major towns of the Valley.

After an overview of the history of divine masked dances within the Kathmandu Valley, the main features of authentic *gaṇpyākhah* traditions will be sketched and arguments developed to distinguish these *authentic, self-contained* performances from *folkloric, representative* ones. Though all dance troupes face challenges from recent socio-structural changes in present-day Nepal, it will be shown that the capability to adapt is rather inherent in folkloric-representative troupes, whereas, considering their foundations, some of the authentic ones bear signs of at least a partial decline. The paper concludes with the prospects for masked dance performances within a society moving away from a self-contained social and cultural system towards an economically, ethnically and culturally open and competitive one.⁴

Authenticity versus folklore

Observations of a variety of the masked dance troupes and their respective contexts give rise to hesitation to see them all as emanations from one and the same melting pot labelled 'folklore'.⁵ Applied to a South Asian context, 'folklore' has sometimes been equated with oral traditions, or the term used to denote minor, locally bound traditions as opposed to a 'high tradition' with a body of respective canonical Hindu and Buddhist texts and teaching. Given its vague and pejorative semantics, and further considering its most controversial connotations within Western scholarly and political discourse, the term 'folklore' is best avoided – or must be redefined. Having done so, one may agree to talking about cultural traditions locally defined and unique to a specific community, such implying some kind of historicity and ongoing transmission from within. The concept of folklore further implies an insider–outsider opposition: on the one side, a specific community sharing a cultural tradition – its members, and among them the specialists being the heirs of the

tradition in question – on the other side, the outsiders, onlookers, the potential audience. A kind of self-consciousness that arises as a community – or even a nation – is confronted with and opposed to the other-ness of foreign communities, countries, or even continents. The framing of both can be flexible to some extent. Depending on the context, a Rai dance may be conceived as representing the traditional dance of the Mewahang Rai living in a specific region in eastern Nepal; or it may count as just a Himalayan folkloric dance if performed in Europe or Japan for an Asian Cultures event. For the purpose of this paper, folklore carries the above connotations, being used as a working term to designate some of the masked dances, namely those which are not part of authentic or self-contained traditions anymore, but are tending to develop into a cultural marketing product. Indeed, there are examples of masked dances having been promoted on the (inter)national market recently.

An overview of the research published so far on the masked dance-dramas within the Kathmandu Valley conveys some idea of the extreme complexity of these performing traditions. Any attempt to fully describe them by means of a linear, written account must fail. With few exceptions⁶ all the studies available concentrate on one single *gaṇpyākhaḥ* tradition, focusing moreover on specific aspects of it only. The Bhaktapur Navadurgā have so far proven the most attractive to foreign researchers.⁷ Several other dances have provided research fields for single scholars.⁸ The attention devoted by local researchers to *gaṇpyākhaḥ* seems to be rather occasional and eclectic up to now. Accounts in the Nepali or Newari languages dedicated to the subject mainly concentrate on the Patan Aṣṭamātrkā, the Harasiddhi-pyākhaḥ and the Bhaktapur Navadurgā. In addition, investigations into historical documents relating to the dances as well as brief descriptions of specific dances are scattered in books, booklets, brochures and vernacular journals.⁹

Primary source materials are scarce. Several of the local 'chronicles of dynasties' (*vaṃśāvalī*, see below) mention the dances. The *guṭhī* documents preserved contain information on dates and material support for specific rituals and feasts that go along with the dances. Finally, some manuals relating to the dance-dramas are preserved in the National Archives in Kathmandu.

The knowledge of rituals and the performances themselves are highly specialised within the troupes. The initiated priests, dancers and musicians each preserve the secret teachings related to their functions. The details of the materials needed and the proper manufacturing of the masks, the metal

ornaments or dresses are known only to craftsmen long engaged in this work. Common rules, duties and regulations are intrinsic to the community as a whole. All these domains of knowledge and inherent responsibilities are kept alive mainly by oral transmission.

Historical references

The beginnings of *gaṇpyākhaḥ* can be traced back mainly to the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, one or the other of the Malla kings being reported as founder (see appendix). If one can trust the local chronicles¹⁰, a good number of the *gaṇpyākhaḥ* date back to Amara Malla, a king who reigned in Kathmandu from 1529 to 1560. He is said to have initiated the Rudrāyaṇī-Sikālī-pyākhaḥ in Khokana; further, the dance-dramas of Halcowk-Ākāśdevī, Tokha-Manamāījudevī, the Kathmandu Navadurgā dances of Pachali Bhairava and Bhadrakālī; and finally, the Kathmandu-Kaṅkeśvarī¹¹ and Kirtipur-Bhāgbhairava dance-dramas (Wright 1990, 205). The legendary origins of the Bhaktapur Navadurgā are traced back to Ānanda Malla, who "set up their images in proper places to ensure the security and protection of the town both internally and externally" (Wright 1990, 163), but it was Suvarṇa Malla, in power from 1487 to 1502, who initiated the Navadurgā's *gaṇpyākhaḥ* in 1513 (ibid., 189). The same king is reported to have founded the Bode Mahālakṣmī-pyākhaḥ tradition.¹² A reference to Harasiddhi is found in a statement to the effect that in N.S. 495 (1375 AD) "the man impersonating the Goddess of Harasiddhi was possessed at Ekātavihār in Yarha" (Vajrācārya and Malla 1985, 64/158). This would support the tendency to identify Jala-Harasiddhi as the oldest masked dance tradition.¹³ According to a legendary account given in the Mahālakṣmī-Purāṇa, at the time of their founding each of the three towns in the Valley was threatened by a demon, with the gods left helpless. When the latter approached the highest Śakti-Devī asking for advice, she created Mahālakṣmī to free Bhaktapur, Mahākālī to free Kathmandu, and Mahāsarasvatī to free Patan. The Bhaktapur Navadurgā, the Kathmandu Śvetakālī-Naradevī, and the Harasiddhi-Trīśakti dances (here assigned to Patan), were initiated in praise of these goddesses (Divasa 1984, 8).¹⁴ Besides such historical references and legendary accounts, a variety of myths elaborate on the origins of the *māṭrkās* and their importance for the Valley and its inhabitants.¹⁵ For each of the divine dance troupes specific sets of myths circulate among people familiar with the tradition. Shaped by local oral transmission, these stories refer to the

origins, identity and specific features of the deities impersonated, and their relation to the locality in question.

The historical references reveal a common feature, namely a relation to a specific king, who may have initiated a dance-drama in circumstances of distress, as a protective measure for his kingdom, because of a dream, or the like. Consequently, dance-drama troupes could expect support from the royal palaces. At the same time, they remained bound to a specific locality. They placed themselves under a leader or 'root deity' (Skt. *mūladevatā*), which was a specific emanation of the goddess. The myths and legends together with the executing power ascribed in general to tantric ritual performance account for the unique position of these masked dance traditions. Their cycles of performance on a this-worldly stage are associated with the maintenance or restoration of cosmic, divine order.

Besides the *gaṇpyākhaḥ* traditions just mentioned, a good number of performances mainly entertaining in character were seen in the Valley. Stone inscriptions and chronicles reporting on the Licchavi period (4th to 9th century) allow for the assumption of a widespread tradition of dance and drama supported by rulers. *Nāṭya-goṣṭhis*¹⁶ are mentioned, while several Umā-Maheśvara icons of the same period show dancers attending the main divine couple (Pradhan 1985, 47–48). The Gopālarājavarṇāvalī (Vajrācārya and Malla, 1985, 33/128) mentions King Ānandadeva (1308–1320) as having commissioned a play staged weekly. In the time of King Jayasthitirājamalladeva (1382–1395) another play, *Caturaṅga Rāmāyaṇa*, was staged (ibid., 62/157). A third play mentioned, *Bhairavānanda*, was shown in all three towns to celebrate King Dharmamalladeva's marriage, its inaugural performance being recorded for N.S. 503 (1383 AD).¹⁷ Cundā Vajrācārya (1996, 9) gives an incomplete list of no less than nine dance troupes, which were invited from surrounding villages and from Kathmandu to perform at the Bhaktapur palace on the occasion of the *vratabandha* (a boy's initiation into manhood) of the crown prince during Bhūpatindra's reign (1762–1769). Based on his source text, Vajrācārya states that the Malla royal palaces patronised a number of troupes which engaged in music, dance, and drama, including comedy, and which were occasionally invited to perform at the palace during festive celebrations of the royals. They were fed and sheltered, and sometimes generously rewarded by the palace (ibid., 32–35).

Some of those dramas and dances were and continue to be shown on specific occasions of the festival year. Siddhinarasimha Malla (king of Patan 1619–1661) initiated the yearly staging of stories in praise of Lord Kṛṣṇa in

the month of Kārtik (October-November), which have been known as Narasiṃha- or Kārtik-nāc up to the present.¹⁸ The Devī-nāc of Kilāgaṭol in Kathmandu, performed during Indrajaṭrā, and the Mahānkāl-nāc of Bhaktapur, the latter performed on various festive occasions both in Bhaktapur itself and externally, should be mentioned in the same context.¹⁹

Even though their entertaining nature stands out, such performances still rely on the riches of an all-inclusive 'religious', dhārmic-śāstric tradition. If the ritual aspect has been of secondary importance, they nevertheless kept along the lines of sanctified aesthetics and divine dramatic plots found in authoritative texts²⁰ and modelled by oral tradition.

Two tendencies among the dance-dramas patronised by kings in the Valley are distinguishable right from their historical beginnings. While some seem to have emerged in response to a need for protection or a wish for increased communal prosperity, others were obviously initiated out of a genuine yearning for entertainment. The compositional materials – stories, plots, divine and mundane characters – were universally provided by the same all-encompassing tradition. However, the extent of ritual embedding, the effect striven for, the potential of power and inherent danger, and the degree of secrecy do differ from one dance-drama to another. The distinction between *ānuṣṭhānika* (Skt./Nep. 'concerning the worship of deities') and *manorañjanātmaka* (Skt./Nep. 'pleasing the mind and senses', 'entertaining') types of performance raised by Tulasi Divasa (1984, 6–7) applies to a large extent to the categories discussed here.

For the purpose of this paper, the features of the *gaṇpyākhaḥ* traditions of the *ānuṣṭhānika* type of performance will be outlined in order to substantiate their authentic and self-contained character and consequent reasons for their present struggle. One should bear in mind that each of the *gaṇpyākhaḥ* traditions, while relying on a common Newar-tantric background, has been moulded and reformed according to local contexts, which results in a unique pattern revealing itself for each of them. Therefore, none of the troupes will fulfil all of the criteria given below, but all will share some of them.²¹

Features of authentic *gaṇpyākhaḥ* performances

Common to authentic *gaṇpyākhaḥ* performances is the dancers' complete merging with the deity. The dancers do not simply personify a specific deity, nor is their dance a devotional expression towards a god.²² Nevertheless, the Newar *gaṇpyākhaḥ* dancers all display artistic-expressive elements in a way

similar to how they were elaborated within Indian performance traditions, the latter based on a philosophy and practices first developed in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*.²³ Specific steps and movements (*cārī*, *maṇḍala*) and hand postures (*mudrā*) are used as modes of expression saturated with meaning.²⁴ But they refer to local, Hindu and Buddhist, tantric teaching rather than the paurāṇic-āgamic philosophical and ritual schools that evolved in various parts of India. Again, the Indian concept of *līlā* as a mode of playful action immanent to gods is not completely foreign to *gaṇpyākhah* performances, but the prevalent understanding of these dances is as effective – and in most of the cases protective – acts.²⁵

a) The troupe: divinities, specialists and attributes

The most striking attribute of the divine dancers are their masks, themselves deified and handled accordingly. They consist of a variety of materials, with selected clays as the primary raw material. Covering them with cloth, Nepali paper and pastes precedes the application of colours. Exclusively created, painted and repaired by the Citrakār (Newar painters' caste) the

masks need to be empowered by a series of rituals.²⁶ These include ceremonies similar to those performed for any icon or statue to be installed in a temple or family shrine.²⁷ And like icons, they are worshipped as emanations of the divinities they represent. At the end of a cycle, such masks may be stored, or else consigned to a fire as a consequence of the ritual death of the deities.²⁸

Further attributes of the *deutās* (Nep. 'deities', commonly used to address the divine dancers) are their specific garments, ornaments and jewellery. The sword (Skt./Nep. *khaḍga*) is the most common among the weapons displayed. The elements of dance include specific movements, steps and hand postures (Skt./Nep. *mudrā*); rather than the voice, these bodily gestures are used as a means of expression.²⁹ The dancers are assigned a specific status from the moment of their first *dīkṣā* (tantric initiation). They variably keep additional rules in order to preserve their heightened ritual purity, they may observe to a restricted diet, specific clothing and hair-dress and a specified behaviour towards the community.³⁰ In villages like Khokana, Theco or Bode, becoming a member of the *dyahkalah* (New. 'troupe of deities') means a life-long commitment.

The troupes not only consist of dancers, but also include a variety of further members responsible for the one or other office. The duties of the *guru* ('master' or 'teacher') are split within some troupes into the *mūl-guru*

(New./Nep. 'root teacher'), the *pyākhah-guru* (New. 'dance teacher'), the *bājā-guru* (New. 'music teacher'), the *mye-hale-guru* (New. 'teacher of the songs') and the *pūjā-guru* (New./Nep. 'master of worship'). Some places, such as Halcowk or Bode, just have one *guru*, responsible for teaching and coordination. The musicians are always part of the core troupe. The *dyahbuh* (New. 'bearer of the *mūdyah*' – see below) is another important member designed to the carrying and attending of the major deity invoked in a jar (Skt./Nep. *kalaśa*).³¹ Specific carriers are appointed for each of the ritual items taken along during processions and displayed while performing.³² There may be further members of inferior status responsible for the animal sacrifices and the preparation and serving of food to the divine *gaṇa*.³³ Each of the dancers has one or two assistants, called *jvakālu* (New. 'helper') or *nāyā* (Nep. 'guide'). These are usually male family members not belonging to the core troupe.

Knowledge within most of the *gaṇapyākhaḥ* troupes is divided among the specialists involved and not disclosed to others of the troupe or even to outsiders. Consequently, neophytes among the dancers or musicians are initiated and taught exclusively by their respective *guru*. The *gurus* are recruited from the senior members according to age or experience within the dance troupe. Minor duties are likewise transmitted to newcomers by the senior members in charge. Though the major part of the specialised knowledge relies on oral transmission, there may exist manuals with guidelines recorded for the staging sequences or some of the ritual acts.³⁴

The dancers' *jāt*³⁵ varies to some extent with each troupe (see appendix). The *Gāthu/Gāthā* (gardeners and flower-sellers, alternatively called *Mālākār*, 'makers of flower garlands', *Mālī* or *Vanmālā*) and the *Jyāpu* (New./Nep. also *Kisān* – farmers) are the most common, else there are *Putavār* (porters of royal litters), *Balāmi* (cutters and sellers of wood) and *Kumāi* (potters), all of low social status. Some of the troupes are recruited from higher-ranking *jāts* like the *Śreṣṭhas* and the priestly *Rājopādhyāyas*. The majority of the *jāts* belong to the Newar-Hindu tradition, but the Patan Aṣṭamātrkā offer an exception, with Newar Buddhist *jāts* of the highest status (*Vajrācārya* and *Śākya*) performing. Linked with all the troupes is at least one organisational body (Nep. *guṭhī*) responsible for all the duties related to the performance. The members of the *guṭhī* may be identical with the troupe itself. Further local *guṭhīs* may have secondary functions, and the governmental Guthī-saṁsthān, the governmental 'Guthī-Assembly' may provide some support in cash and goods.³⁶

The number and identity of the deities embodied vary with every *gaṇa* (see appendix).

The goddesses generally joining the *mātrkā-gaṇa* include Brāhmaṇī/Brahmāyaṇī, Maheśvarī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhi, Kumārī/Kaumārī, Indrāṇī/Indrāyaṇī, Cāmuṇḍā/Mahākālī and Mahālakṣmī.³⁷ Besides these classical names, a variety of local Nepali and Newari names are also current.³⁸ In some troupes only one or two of the *mātrkās* are part of the divine set, whereas in others they all appear on stage. They are led by Bhairava and Gaṇeśa and escorted by Siṃhini/Siṃhā ('lioness') and Vyāṅgini/Dumhā ('tigress'), the latter two acting as guardians and occasional fun-makers within the *gaṇa*. Further deities variously included are Mahādeva, Kumāra, Pārvatī and Gaṅgā, and additional emanations of Bhairava. The presence of a demonical figure, be it referred to as Daitya, Varṇa or Mahiṣāsura,³⁹ is indicative of the culmination of these performances, which enact the final triumph of the divine female over the demonic.⁴⁰ A Lakhe dancer⁴¹, semi-divine beings like the Kicā (New. 'dog') or the Kiśi (New. 'elephant'), or legendary figures like King Vikramāditya may complete the set of masked dancers.

Not all the deities belonging to the troupe are personified by dancers. Mahālakṣmī and Mahādeva are sometimes taken along as a small metal mask, and various reasons are given why they are not to be embodied. The demon god of the Bhadrakālī troupe is represented by a huge wooden mask. Further, among some of the *gaṇas* the *mūdyah* (New. 'root-deity') or *siphadyah/sipho dyah* (sometimes translated as 'oleander deity', for the flowers used to decorate the shrine) occupies a key position both in ritual and on stage.⁴² This deity resides in a *kalaśa* installed in a moveable shrine on the dance platform. It is worshipped by dancers and public alike. All the offerings are first displayed to this deity. If animal sacrifices are performed, it is again to the *mūdyah* that the first share of blood goes. The identity of this deity is not disclosed generally. From the gathered descriptions of its character, one can assume that it consists of the essence of the whole of the divine troupe, conceived as its root or origin, or else, that it is the manifestation of a deity superior to all the ones appearing on stage.⁴³ The *kapālapātra* ('skull-vessel') or *mahāpātra* ('great vessel') represents another divine emanation within some of the *mātrkāgaṇas*.⁴⁴ It may be placed in front of the *mūdyah's* shrine as a recipient of offerings, carried as an attribute by one of the *mātrkās*, or appear as a key requisite of the dramatic plot. If rice-

beer⁴⁵ is distributed to the *gaṇa* by one of the gods, the *kapālapātra* serves as the drinking bowl.⁴⁶

The *mohanī* vessel is another requisite to which divine qualities are attributed. It contains a black paste (made of collyrium and oil) which is exclusively used in tantric contexts. Its production involves another secret ritual process, empowering this substance to induce divine possession as soon as applied to the forehead of the dancers and their masks.

Finally, some of the musical instruments, especially the *khīm* or *dhamāi* drums, are held to be divine representations to which a supreme status is assigned, and they are worshipped accordingly by priests and devotees.

b) The musicians

The patron deity not only of artistic performances, but also of any creative activity or skill, is Nāsadyaḥ (New. 'God of music and dance'). Within the Kathmandu Valley tradition, he is regarded as a fierce form of Śiva.⁴⁷ Unlike the beautiful and philosophically highly inspired iconography of the South Indian Śiva-Naṭarāja or Nṛteśvara (Skt. 'King/Master of Dance'), Nāsadyaḥ is usually represented as one or three holes in the back wall of the numerous open shrines dedicated to him.⁴⁸ He is repeatedly worshipped by all troupes, from the beginning of the dance and music teaching sessions up to the performance proper. When the troupe goes on tour, he may be taken along in a *kalaśa* to be placed side by side with the *mūdyah* shrine.

The musicians of the *gaṇa* are equipped with a core set of instruments, including double-headed drums (New. *khīm* or *dhamāi*) sometimes decorated with rams' horns,⁴⁹ at least one set of small and big cymbals (New. *chusyā*, *tāh* and *kāy*), and two to eighteen elongated wind instruments (New. *pvamgā*, or the even longer *khāḥ*). The latter produce the invocatory sound for the deities to appear on stage. They are further blown to introduce the sacrificial and other core sequences of a performance.⁵⁰ More than just parts of a musical ensemble, these instruments are considered to produce divine sound, their divine 'voices' telling unique stories properly understood by gods and the initiated only. The same applies to the language of the songs, be they sung by the musicians or the corporeal deities themselves. This language is said to be *dyahbāe*, 'the sound of the gods', and not understandable by unqualified mortals.⁵¹ The dancers themselves add to the acoustic tableau by jingling their *ghamgalās*, a number of small bells stitched to a piece of cloth or leather and worn on their ankles. During processions and key ritual acts,

the core set of musicians may be enlarged by a number of wind and percussion instruments played by members of the local musicians' *jāts*.

c) Dramaturgy, performance and audience

Every troupe has its own dance dramaturgy. While on stage, the Khokana- or Harasiddhi-pyākhaḥ will adhere to a given set of sequences – an orchestrated line of myths and legends, interrupted by worship sessions, rest periods, and sacrifice.⁵² While these performances take a good day to come to the concluding acts, the Halcowk twelve-yearly displayed set of dances takes but one to two hours, including the final worship and offerings brought by the public. While 'alive', the Halcowk deities are formally invited by the Kathmandu royal palace to perform at Hanumāndhoka, and they further accept invitations from private families residing in Patan and Kathmandu. The Bhaktapur Navadurgā perform orchestrated sets of dances and sacrifices while on tour through the villages. They additionally stage a series of dances specific to the initiating and concluding periods of their annual cycle. The Bode dances concentrate not on stage performance, but on continuous processions, completing various prescribed tours around the village within one day and halting at every major temple for a specific set of dances. They always keep in line, never altering the sequence of deities. Not that they abjure divine mythical enactment, but they do not stage a drama-like succession of acts.

As noted above, common to all the troupes is an obvious or underlying archetypal plot of a demon threatening the worlds of humans and gods alike, and the goddess overcoming the destructive invader. The demon is usually depicted as an out-and-out enemy, but also sometimes as an ambivalent character caught in the double identity of lover and foe.⁵³ Such a basic scenario of the divine feminine opposed to the demonic is known not only from the *Devīmahātmya*, but also from innumerable vernacular versions of a similar plot. Seen from this angle, the buffalo sacrifice as a culminating scene can at least partly be understood as a re-enactment of the goddess's final victory.⁵⁴ Animal sacrifices to ferocious tantric deities are common practice, with the blood as primary offering being sprinkled on the deity's image. When such tantric deities are embodied, their drinking of blood from its dying source is another variation on the same sacrificial pattern. The sacrificial part of the performance will always be one of the culminating points, and one sure to draw an audience. Bhairava generally acts as the executioner – he strikes with either his or the *mūḍyāḥ*'s sword. The number

and identity of the deities joining in the blood-drinking sequence again varies. In Harasiddhi no more than three deities (Kumārī, Bālkumārī and Bhairava) will attend; in Khokana they are Kumārī, Vārāhī, Ajimā/Mahākālī and Bhairava. In Parphing, Kālī alone drinks from a sacrificed goat's neck, after its slaughter at the hands of Kumārī. As for the Bhaktapur and Theco Navadurgā troupes, all deities but Maheśvara will come on stage to claim their share.

Common to most *gaṇpyākhaḥ* performances is frequent interaction with the audience. The divine dance includes breaks for worshippers to come and offer *pūjā* (worship including the offering of flowers, light and incense at a minimum) to the gods on stage. Even during the dances proper, people may flock in for worship. Individuals and families do so, along with *ṭol*⁵⁵ and further local associations. The number of offerings and animal sacrifices presented to the dancing gods varies considerably from place to place. Sometimes, as in Theco or Khokana, elaborate offerings including sacrificial animals, build up. Moderately wealthy families may seize the opportunity of the *pyākhaḥ* to offer a meritorious *pañcabali*.⁵⁶ But while in Jala more than fifty ducks and twenty-five goats' heads may pile up in front of the *mūdyah* shrine at the conclusion of the *bali* ('blood offering') sequence, the Halcowk *deutā* received, at the last opening of their twelve-year dance cycle in 2001, just some casual *pūjā* offerings – at the most boiled eggs – from the audience.⁵⁷ The divine dancers for their part may distribute five-coloured thread (New. *pasūkā*) or flowers from the *mūdyah* shrine as blessings. They may also accept invitations to private houses, where they are served to their heart's content. Some of the divine dancers, the Theco Bhairava for instance (who is said to provide male progeny to families hitherto deprived), are especially invited for their miraculous powers.

The dance days are a meritorious time for women to keep vows (Nep. *vrata basne*) – they may observe full fasting, perform an offering of one hundred eight lights (Nep. *eksau-āt battī bālne*) or continuously worship the dancing gods during their performance.⁵⁸ In Jala, the *vrata basne* women will sit all day in front of the performing gods, moving onto the dance area time and again for another *pūjā*. In compensation they will get a special *prasād* (food offering blessed by a deity) by the gods at the conclusion of the day. And whatever their wishes, they are said to be fulfilled.

Animals are not only offered by the audience; they are a basic part of the material support provided by the Guṭhī-saṃsthān. In the beginning, the troupes were patronised by the Malla kings. For performing in front of or

even inside the palaces, they could expect material support and agricultural land grants in return. Despite the coming to power of the Śāha kings in 1769, this kind of relationship was continued. The fundamental changes in the political system about half a century ago implied a loss of feudal rights formerly held by the king. With the Guṭhī-saṃsthān, a new governmental framework was created to control the income of the now nationalised *guṭhī* lands and the redistribution of the latter. As far as the *gaṇpyākhaḥ* are concerned, the Guṭhī-saṃsthān mainly supports them with goods and cash for rituals and related feasts, while another governmental organisation, the Purātattva-vibhāga (HMG Department of Archaeology), charged with preserving the national heritage, may contribute some money to cover expenses for masks, ornaments and dress. At least in recent times, these contributions are said, in all cases inquired about, to have been insufficient to cover the expenses. This entails an additional financial burden for the local *guṭhīs* responsible for the performances and the manifold related duties. In some villages each household is expected to contribute goods and cash, regularly collected by the *guṭhī* members.⁵⁹

Still, the traditional relation to the king is not completely given up. A delegation of the dancers' *guṭhī* will, before starting a new cycle, ask for permission from the king by formally appearing at the Nārāyaṇhīti Palace to hand over a *kisli*⁶⁰ to an official and to worship at various shrines inside the royal premises. The *dabhus* or *dabalīs*, the traditional performance platforms of royal palaces, are still used by all the troupes performing in one of the royal towns of the Valley, even though, except for Kathmandu, there is no king anymore who might attend. One instance of concrete interaction between the king and the divine dancers has been continued up to the present in Kathmandu: the *kaḍgasiti*, the ritual 'exchange of swords' with the king, is a key feature of the Bhadrakālī and Pachali Bhairava twelve-year dances (van den Hoek 1994, 387–388).

d) Layers of interpretation

Hand in hand with all the dances goes a multi-layered potential of interpretation. This becomes obvious if only trying to identify the deities involved. Even the *māṭrkāgaṇas* of Bhaktapur, Naradevī or Patan, which may appear univocal as far as the identity of the deities is concerned, may assemble a sometimes distracting range of appellations. The identity of additional deities, like those represented by the *mahāpātra* or the *khīm* drum, is not univocal either. And as if not enough of layers and connections hidden

before non-initiates, there remains the question of the *mūdyah's* identity and its relation to the divine *gaṇa*.⁶¹

Reading Linda Itlis' article (1987) might result in the impression that the Jala-pyākhaḥ, with a number of Buddhist deities and a Newar Buddhist Vajrācārya as the main priest, relies on Buddhist teaching. Along this line, Harasiddhi herself appears as one of the major *yoginīs* in the Valley, closely affiliated to Vajrayoginī of Sankhu. However, Rameshvar Maharjan, the son of the actual Kumārī-*deutā* in Harasiddhi, describes the Jala-pyākhaḥ as a purely Hindu-based performance, and he stresses the point by saying that the divine troupe is exclusively of *kāśīgotra* descent. He understands the *mūdyah*, Harasiddhi or Jaladyah, as an androgynous deity, combining Hara-Śiva and his consort Siddhidātrī, the ninth of the Durgās, who is herself identified with Guhyeśvarī.⁶² According to some ritual manuals related to Harasiddhi, Jaladyah carries another identity as Trīśakti-Devī. In this understanding the Harasiddhi *mūdyah* is the essence of the tripartite *śakti* goddesses Mahāsarasvatī, Mahālakṣmī and Mahākālī, who are also associated with Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva.⁶³ The lavishing between Buddhist and Hindu identities is found among several of the deities embodied. The Patan Aṣṭamāṭṛkā, though representing the Hindu circle of mother goddesses, are not only worshipped for their protective power, but also for their association with the eight *mahāmayas* ('great hinderances') that one is to overcome according to Buddhist teaching.⁶⁴ Siṃhinī and Vyaṅginī, both outcomes of the Mahāyāna Buddhist pantheon, always appear as the attendants or guardian deities of the *māṭrkās*, themselves no doubt of Hindu origin. Taking another example of the Harasiddhi troupe, one and the same set of three dancers may be interpreted as Mañjuśrī with his two wives by some, whereas others see them as Śiva with Phucamājyu and Jhīmcamājyu.⁶⁵ Both identifications are based on classical as well as local myths.

The association of the *deutās* embodied with specific deities of the surroundings reveals another layer of understanding. Each of the members of a *gaṇa* may be ascribed to a specific temple of its own, and several legendary accounts in respect to its whereabouts may circulate among the local communities.⁶⁶ To some extent, such relations may be reconfirmed ritually, e.g. when the dancers initially visit the temple of the deity embodied for worship.

On still another level, the *gaṇpyākhaḥ* deities are identified with deities and divine plots provided by Hindu classic texts. The respective stories

known from epic and paurāṇic sources are then enriched with additional, locally emerged mythical elements.

The foregoing may suffice to show that the *gaṇpyākhaḥ* do distinguish themselves in various aspects from other dance performance genres (Nep. *nṛtya-nāṭak*) enacted in the Valley and variably characterised as *dhārmika*, *śāstrīya*, or *saṃskṛtika*.⁶⁷ They go beyond mere stage plays in their attempt to achieve a complete, 'authentic' performance. Through practice and rituals the dancers prepare their bodies to become suitable 'recipients' of the divinity they are to incarnate. Consequently the deity embodied is worshipped during the performance as a consecrated image would be. The sequences shown in public are but another ritual part of the total performance of the divine troupe. Though performed for their ritual (protective or cosmological) effects, the *gaṇpyākhaḥ* troupes of an authentic type still contribute a valuable share to the whole of cultural artistic expression. Not at least for their tantric embedding – implying the conception of the divine *gaṇas* as fierce and potentially dangerous ones – a flavour of mystery to the non-initiate is part of the attraction radiating from their performances.

Aspects of a transitional period

In their introduction to Indian performance traditions, Richmond *et al.* (1993, 8–12) distinguish five interlocking spheres of influence: the classical, the ritual, the devotional, the folk-popular and the modern. The characteristics outlined for the category of 'ritual performance' are seen to apply to the masked dances being discussed here. These dances do serve a specific function. They are performed mainly for a ritual end – which ultimately implies reliving the cosmological concepts of inherent cycles of renewal and the overcoming of evil. They have a highly elaborate structure, the performance itself being only one part of the total ritual complex, which calls for a division of specialized functions and duties. The elaborate investiture, especially the masks, and the worship of the dancers as deities by the spectator-participants, are further aspects seen as specific to this category of performance. The last characteristic given is important for the following discussion: "*Ritual performances, once established, remain relatively closed systems, in which a specific sequence of events must be precisely enacted in order for the efficacy of the ritual to be attained*" (op. cit., 10–11). This implies a limited flexibility for the *gaṇpyākhaḥ* troupes in terms of adaptation to a changing environment. Nevertheless, like any living tradition, the dances

have been subject to change. The historical references to Harasiddhi provide evidence of long-term interruptions of the masked dances more than once.⁶⁸ Along with names variously attached to the main deity there must have been divergent opinions among the *gurus* – Vajrācāryas and Rājopādhyāyas in turn – on the correct understanding of the dance and the corresponding ritual corpus, which seems to have vacillated between Newar-Hindu and Newar-Buddhist predominance.

Such internal ideological discrepancies may further have induced change within the Boḍe-pyākhaḥ. This performance is mentioned in the early sources as 'Mahālakṣmī nāṭak',⁶⁹ but nowadays everybody calls it Nīlavārāhī nāc. As each of these two goddesses has a temple in present-day Boḍe, one can but assume that at some point in time, a struggle over their hierarchy resulted in the change of focus and name.

In her study on Khokana's social organisation, Silke Wolf elaborates on the potential for conflict inherent to social bodies. As she shows, the *pyākhaḥ*-related organisations, though hierarchically structured, are made up of individuals who at times come to divergent opinions, whether for reasons of honest difference or personal interest. In fact, in the case of Panauti, quarrels among the core members of the troupe were the major reason why the dance was discontinued in 1965.⁷⁰

Recent times have induced new kinds of modifications, which on the whole are of an irreversibly degenerating nature as far as the whole of this performance genre is concerned. Particularly noticeable to an outsider is the decreasing number of performances by several of the troupes. Up to a few decades back the Harasiddhi dancers used to maintain an extensive schedule of performances during their twelve-year cycle, including appearances in Bungamati, Khokana, Deopatan, Patan and Bhaktapur (twelve performances each), and also Sangha, Dulikhel, Panauti, Dholaka, Lubhu, Thaiba, Chapagaon and Nakati.⁷¹ Of all these places, Dulikhel alone was left in recent times.⁷² The Bhaktapur Navadurgā have been skipping several of the villages previously visited during their yearly tour. For the last two years the Theco Navadurgā have contented themselves with going just for one day to Patan, rather than staying there for several nights as they used to do. They have further refrained from going to Chapagaon. The Bode Nīlavārāhī troupe has discontinued visiting Paśupati, Bhaktapur and Nagadesh during their years of *gaṇa pherne*.⁷³ The Sankhu *devīs* now perform but one night a year, whereas in former times they were invited to many more places.⁷⁴

A fact rather hidden to the outsider is lamented by elders who have had long experience with the dances. According to them the traditional (tantric) teaching is losing its hold. The *gurus* may still treasure this centuries-old knowledge, but their pupils of a younger generation are no longer committed in the same way. As a consequence the dance movements, the *mudrās* and steps, each designed as highly meaningful and efficacious patterns, are increasingly turning into a series of rather cursory and sloppy ones. The shivering (New. *khākegu*) of the dancers, according to them an effect induced by the deity entering the dancer's body, tends to become a purely theatrical gesture.⁷⁵

With the interruption of traditional teaching, some troupes face serious problems in recruiting new dancers.⁷⁶ The rhythm of modern life with its modified ideals and goals is gaining the upper hand, especially among the urban young. Such requirements as regularly attending classes and finding a permanent occupation have had their impact on potential dancers. Consequently, not only are the training periods getting shorter, but also young initiates are increasingly alienated by traditional learning.

The problems do not stop here. Time frames, venues and routes traditionally prescribed in detail are not consistent with present-day realities either. Attending week- or night-long staging does not fit into modern working or college schedules; consequently, the audience decreases. The performances shown on dance platforms inside town cause bad headaches to the traffic police. Former procession paths may appear to have been blocked by houses or army camps, or else they have turned into one of the overcrowded streets of Kathmandu Metropolitan City.

The commitment and strain required of the whole of a *gaṇa* to present the performances no longer pay in terms of the appreciation and recognition accorded by the general public. Such is an often heard complaint by the troupes' members. Together with a growing disinterest goes the lack of support and material offerings formerly received from the population and local governmental or private institutions in the towns visited. Two major reasons are given for the decreasing generosity towards the *pyākhaḥ* on the part of the audience. Though the economic situation of many people has improved as compared with earlier times, income is more reluctantly invested in offerings to the dancers, in view of multiplied expenses and alternatives to spending one's savings. Second, the dance performances, once a welcome occasion for entertainment, are nowadays competing with mass media, television being the most potent one. A further deplorable fact is the decrease

or even cessation of material and cash support from *guthi* sources. This is not surprising, since the *guthi* lands of both local and state-controlled *guthis* are increasingly being handed over to private owners, and unless alternative income sources are made available to fill up this gap, the troupes are left with the choice either to add up from their own pockets or to mutilate or drop at least parts of their ritual and performance duties.

The increasing confrontation with foreign elements that have forced their way into what was formerly a mainly self-sustained community further heightens any already precarious identity crisis. The conviction that the deities are embodied in the dancers is senselessly called into question before a foreign public. Killing animals, and even more so drinking their blood, may provoke a mixture of shame and anxiousness among the local community. A reluctance to perform any kind of animal sacrifice is gaining ground not only from outside, but even from within, particularly from the urban upper-class Newar community, and this increasingly serves to create a rift with the lower classes and rural communities. The *narabali*, the sacrifice of humans to the gods, may then be played out as an exotic joker. Such practice is legendary for several of the masked dances, supported by scattered hints in the local chronicles.⁷⁷

The "No photo!" commands have become legend with some of the troupes. Concerning the Bhaktapur Navadurgā, there are a number of incidents reported of cameras being smashed by the deities themselves. Sometimes it is the local onlookers rather than the *deutās* who issue the ban on pictures as soon as a foreigner is spotted, although a video-camera with a simultaneous display screen may at other times appear as a special attraction rather than a menace. One may recall the fact that traditionally any substance belonging to a person, and more so a picture, was feared to fall prey to abusive magicians. This cannot hold for gods, though, and the ban is rather explained by the intrusion itself and a notion of something beyond control happening and being carried away.⁷⁸ The idea of detaching and replicating of a unique tradition, be it in the form of pictures or even movies, puts its authenticity in peril.

Such ambivalence in terms of self-understanding and identification accounts for unreflected and wavering attitudes not only towards one's own tradition, but also towards intrusive foreign elements.

To sum up: It becomes more and more difficult, if not impossible, to keep up traditions that on occasion presuppose a society organised and functioning centuries back. The younger generations outgrow traditional patterns of life

embedded in an all-encompassing belief system. Modern educational and working schedules, multiplied interests and entertainment possibilities among the general public, and an ambivalent position towards one's own cultural heritage may well cause a gradual collapse of traditions like the one discussed here.

The *gaṇpyākhaḥ*, having grown out of and relying on a self-contained, supportive community and a worldview that are no more, are obviously in peril. Therefore, the question of continuity within the present social and economic conditions is an urgent one.

Potentials from Within

The two categories of masked dance traditions of the Kathmandu Valley here distinguished – one focussing on its entertaining, the other on its ritual effects – have many aspects in common. They use similar dress, masks and attributes. They are performed by a specific community. They refer to a shared history and religious tradition. The legends related to both are interwoven with local lore specific to the deities enacted and their mythical origins.

But then, as outlined in the table below, the two genres can be distinguished with respect to several criteria, which have a crucial impact on their flexibility in adapting to present-day exigencies.

Criteria	Authentic/ self-contained/ closed performance (<i>ānuṣṭhānika</i>)	Folkloristic/ open performance (<i>manorañjanātmaka</i>)
relation between performers and audience	closed circle, self-contained, interaction-based	open circle, public-oriented, representative
goal of performance	religious	entertaining
ritual impact	high	low
Secrecy	high	low
knowledge transfer	following strict rules, from <i>guru</i> to initiated new member only	disclosed to community members and interested outsiders
participation	restrictive, bound to one's <i>jāt/ thar/</i> family	open within the given community
specialists	defined by tradition, authoritative	selected among the most knowledgeable within the local community
time of performance	bound to lunar day/ month/ year/ twelve-year cycle	not time-bound
place of performance	bound to traditional ritual and performance venues	not place-bound
adaptive will	limited	potentially active
adaptive capacity	narrow	potentially wide
commercialising tendency	none	potentially great

Criteria distinguishing the two types of authentic/self-contained versus folkloristic/open performance

The dances of the *manorañjanātmaka* genre, given their inclination towards entertainment rather than a ritual goal, did not develop the same rigidity in terms of structure, authoritative teaching or accuracy of performance as found among the *pyākhaḥ* troupes of the ritual genre. Therefore, they have an inherent adaptive potential, for example, to widen the frame of performance time and place, and to adapt their programme content to the expectations of the audience, or they may chose to develop different sets of dances displayed according to circumstances. Within the present-day social context, they tend towards a *folkloristic, open* performance type rather than an *authentic, closed* one. Therefore, this category has the opportunity to open itself up to alternative forums without betraying its major values. The dancers may appear, for instance, on the same stage with modern theatre or folkloristic dance troupes. They may even, up to a certain point, opt for commercialising themselves as a cultural product of the country. The Mahāṅkāl-nāc, for instance, did not deny invitations to Europe and Japan in recent years. Be it their choice or not, by performing in such alternative settings, they move closer to folkloristic groups such as those staging traditional Rai or Tharu dances for an anonymous public, and so represent their respective communities within the country and abroad.

Recent examples of a successful revitalisation of traditions by applying gentle reforms can be seen in the two *pyākhaḥ* troupes of Patan-Lalitpur. Only a few years ago the Aṣṭamāṭrkā, after a break of some years, appeared anew on stage, now managed by a voluntary body rather than a traditional *guṭhī*, and with loosened restrictions in terms of *jāt* participation. Further the timing of the performances was adapted to the modern requirements of local publics, being rescheduled for the evening instead of late night hours.⁷⁹ For about thirty years the staging of the Kārtik-nāc had come to be reduced to two consecutive days a year only. In 1980 a committee was formed to restructure this dance-drama, which in former times had covered the whole month of Kārtik. The new organisational body succeeded in revitalising the Kārtik-nāc, which is now again staged on eight consecutive evenings, each with a variety of divine, mythical and comical plots.⁸⁰

These two examples may be counted as traditions that have ventured onto a middle path: they did not give up their claim to being founded on a dhārmic – and in the case of the Aṣṭamāṭrkā, ritually effective – base; at the same time, they not only procured alternative operating funds, but also introduced newly adapted organisational and scheduling frameworks.⁸¹

For the *gaṇpyākhaḥ* troupes of the ritual or *ānuṣṭhānika* category proper, choosing to develop into a folkloristic type of performance would invite a complete break with their origins, their authenticity, their major *raison d'être*. Nevertheless, they are forced to face the present-day challenges. Given the above-mentioned signs of decline, they need to reconsider their present situation and possible measures to improve it. The question at hand for each of these troupes is how far they can allow change without giving up their identity. As long as the local communities remain loyal and identify with their *gaṇpyākhaḥ* tradition, many problems can be solved. But with the opening of formerly self-contained, closed communities, the attitude of respectful appreciation no longer goes without saying. Where traditional structures are fading away, alternatives must be developed, both on the local and governmental levels.

One urgent task is the uninterrupted provision of necessary funds for the *gaṇpyākhaḥ* troupes. With the traditional bodies generating income for them losing their base on the local and governmental levels, a reformed schedule of systematic support is required.⁸² Some of the troupes manage to get irregular financial support from one or another commercial body, or else occasional donations from individuals, whether local or foreign. With financial support from the local government, the Panauti Devī-nāc experienced a revival for the *Visit Panauti* tourism fair organised in 1999. Since then their yearly performance has been rescheduled for the seventh day (*Saptamī*) of the Dasain festival in autumn – given that the municipality provides the necessary funding, which must be decided every year anew. There being no assurance of the material and financial support needed until two weeks before performing, the body responsible for the performance faces problems in planning and preparations.⁸³ Therefore, if one wants to secure the continuity of the Panauti or any other traditional dance-drama, the covering of expenses cannot be left to chance in the long run.

Besides the question of alternative funding, there opens a potential of influence on the level of respect and appreciation for such traditions. The print and broadcast media reporting on local traditions increasingly influence the opinions of the general public. Such power and responsibility is to be wielded seriously. Further on, educational institutions are increasingly taking up tasks formerly fulfilled by the parental house. Given the teachers' influence on mind-making in the class room, the conveyance of esteem for the traditions of one's own country and communities may turn into a challenging matter.

Such considerations address attitudes towards *gaṇpyākhaḥ* traditions and related practical, organisational and financial matters. Efforts on these levels do offer some potential for actively counteracting recent developments towards decline. The heart of the *gaṇpyākhaḥ* for its part, the traditional knowledge and experience within the troupe, and with it the continuity of or possible modifications to the body of ritual involved, remains the exclusive domain of the heirs of this unique tradition.

Summary and concluding remarks

Along with a number of other regional genres of performance, the masked dance-dramas in the Valley can be classified as *dharmic* or *śāstric*, having developed out of a specific teaching and related body of authoritative texts and oral tradition. Unique to the authentic *gaṇ-* or *mātrkāpyākhaḥ* is their embeddedness in a centuries-old transmission of tantric teaching. Locally shaped practices are predominant, the corresponding knowledge being carefully dispensed by initiated specialists only. The staging is conceived as an extended form of ritual, with the publicly enacted sequences opposed to a corpus of further secret rituals. Though the dramatic plot and the deities enacted may refer to the Hindu or Buddhist classic traditions on one level, the close connection with a localised divine setting of the deities and their respective myths is what lies at its heart. The audience is an integral part of the performance, which implies, to a certain degree, interdependence in terms of ideological and material support. In their initial period, when they were closely associated with the kings reigning in the Valley, the *gaṇpyākhaḥ* troupes were granted royal support in exchange for their divine enactment, whose aim was to secure protection and continuity for the kingdoms and their inhabitants. For all its modifications time and again, be it for social, practical, political or ideological reasons, the current transitional period represents a new challenge for the troupes, namely to reconcile age-old ritual performance traditions with the influences of modern life, distracted as it is by multitudinous worldviews fed by an all-encompassing globalisation process.

The visible efforts to consciously engage in maintaining and encouraging the *gaṇpyākhaḥ* traditions have been few so far. Many more will be required to address current struggles of not only the *gaṇpyākhaḥ* troupes discussed here, but also a number of other cultural heritage treasures. A certain loss of their authenticity may be the price asked to ensure their continuity. The deplorable alternative would be watching such traditions either break down into insipid relics or else vanish as a whole.

Appendix: Authentic Gaṇīpyākhaḥ troupes, deities embodied, jāṭṣ of dancers and historical references.⁸⁴

- 'Mātrkāgaṇa' refers to the Aṣṭamātrkā, the eight goddesses most commonly identified as Brāhmaṇī/Brahmāyaṇī, Maheśvarī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhī, Kumārī/ Kaumārī, Indrāṇī/ Indrāyaṇī, Cāruṇḍā/ Mahākālī, and Mahālakṣmī. They are led by Bhairava and Gaṇeśa, and further escorted by Siṃhīnī/Siṃhā and Vyāṅgiṇī/Dumhā.
- The years given are AD.
- # introduces abbreviated bibliographical references (author's name and page number).
- marks dances performed every twelve years only.
- 'Mūḍyaḥ' here denotes the main deity of a troupe; it may be embodied by a dancer (+) and/or reside in the *mūḍyaḥ* shrine (=) installed on the dance platform.

Locality: Gaṇīpyākhaḥ	Deities embodied/enacted	Performed by (jāt)	Historical references
Kathmandu: Bhadrakālī-/Lumaḍi- Ajimā-pyākhaḥ*	<i>Mūḍyaḥ</i> : Bhadrakālī/ Lumaḍi-Ajimā (+ =) <i>Deities</i> : Mātrkāgaṇa. (Mahālakṣmī carried ahead as a small mask on a stick) Add. Sveta-Bhairava embodied, Daitya as a wooden mask-shield	<i>Gāṭhu-Mālākār</i>	Initiated by Amara Malla (1529–1560) #Has61, #Wri205
Kathmandu: Pachali-Bhairava- pyākhaḥ*	<i>Mūḍyaḥ</i> : Pachali Bhairava (+ =) <i>Deities</i> : Mātrkāgaṇa	<i>Gāṭhu-Mālākār</i>	Initiated by Amara Malla (1529–1560) #Has61, #Wri205

Kathmandu: Naradevī-/Śvetakālī-/ Nyatamamaruṭ-Ajīmā- pyākhaḥ	<i>Mūdyah</i> : Naradevī/Śvetakālī/ Nyatamamaru (+ =) <i>Deities</i> : Mātrkāgaṇa For 12-year performance add. Daitya, Kumāra and Mahādeva	<i>Jyāpu-Kisān</i>	Initiated?
Lalitpur-Patan: Aṣṭamātrkā-pyākhaḥ	<i>Mūdyah</i> : not specified <i>Deities</i> : Mātrkāgaṇa	<i>Vajrācārya and Śākya</i>	Initiated by Srinivāsa Malla (1661-1684) #Has69
Harasiddhi/ Jala: Harasiddhi- or Jala- pyākhaḥ	<i>Mūdyah</i> : Bhavani/Trisakti (=) <i>Deities/characters</i> : Tāmavādyah Rikheśvara (Tāmanarṣi), Agni with two attendants, Ganeśa with Riddhī and Siddhī Maheśvara, Śiva-Maṇjuśrī, Phucamājyū and Jhīncamājyū, Rāmacandra, Bali Rāja and Sugrīva (<i>daitya</i> brothers) with their wives, Rāja Vikramāditya, 4 Rājas of the directions, Mantrī, Rakṣasa/Lakhe, Kiśi Bhairav(ī), Kumārī, Bālkumārī	<i>Jyāpu-Kisān</i>	Vikramāditya from Ujjain to #Wri131-132 Nepal Ref. to 1375 #Gop64 Revived by Amara Malla #Has61, #Wri205. Reinstated by Amara Malla 1654 #Ilt-88 More ref. on this tradition: #Has70, 79, 89, #Pou63-64, #Raj2,10 (see Ilt-89)
Bhaktapur: Navadurgā-pyākhaḥ	<i>Mūdyah</i> : Mahālakṣmī (=) <i>Deities</i> : Mātrkāgaṇa (Mahālakṣmī as small mask attached to the shrine) Add. Seto Bhairava Mahādeva carried along as mask	<i>Gāthu-Mālākār</i>	Initiated by Suvarṇa Malla (1513) #Has58, #Wri189

Bode (Thimi): Nīlavārāhi- or Mahālākṣmī-pyākhaḥ	Mūdyah: Nīlavārāhi (+) <i>Deities:</i> Bhairava, Gaṇeśa, Vārāhi, Kumārī, Siṃha, Dvārāpāla (, Gaṇeśa, Vārāhi, Kumārī and Siṃha each embodied by 4 masked dancers)	Śreṣṭha	Initiated by Suvarṇa Malla (1513) #Has58, #Wri189. Further ref. to 1856 #Shre14-18
Kīrtipur: Bāghbhairava- pyākhaḥ*	Mūdyah: Bāghbhairava/Mahālākṣmī (=) <i>Deities:</i> Mātṛkāgāṇa (with Gaṅgā instead of Maheśvarī), Kaṭi Mahādyah as small mask on stick	<i>Gāthū-Mālākār</i>	Initiated by Amara Malla (1529-1560) #Has61, #Wri205
Khokana: Sikālī-/Rudrāyaṇi- pyākhaḥ	Mūdyah: Sikālī-Rudrāyaṇi (=) <i>Deities/characters:</i> Mātṛkāgāṇa Kumāra, Śakti Kumāra Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Mahādeva Hanuman, Gaṅgā Mahiśāsura/Vaṇṇa/Daitya and Lakhe Nāg-kanya and Nāg-kanyā, Dvārāpāla Kal and Kica,	<i>Jyāpu-Kisān</i>	Initiated by Amara Malla (1529-1560) #Has61 #Wri205
Theco: Navadurgā-pyākhaḥ	Mūdyah: Savadyah (=) <i>Deities:</i> Mātṛkāgāṇa (Indrāyaṇi is fixed to the altar as a small mask) Add. Mahādeva. Add. Śvetabhairava only during 12-year performance	<i>Gāthū-Mālākār</i> (previously <i>Jyāpu?</i> – see Toffin 1996, 220-21)	Introduced by Amara Malla (1529-1560) #Has62

Sankhu: Devī-pyākhah	<i>Mūdyah</i> : an emanation of the goddess (+) <i>Deities</i> : Devī, Caṇḍī, Bhairava	Śreṣṭha and others	Initiated? 2 Mss dated 1856 and 1863 #Shre-96
Tokha: Manamāiju-pyākhah	<i>Mūdyah</i> : Manamāiju-Ajima (formerly +), now taken along on <i>kaṭh</i>) <i>Deities</i> : Ajimā, Gaṇeśa, Bhairava, Kumārī, Manamāiju	<i>Jyāpu-Kisān</i>	Initiated by Amara Malla (1529–1560) #Has61, #Wri205
Halcow: Ākāśabhairava- pyākhah*	<i>Mūdyah</i> : Ākāśa-Bhairavī/Ākāśa-Devī (+) <i>Deities</i> : Kumāra and Caṇḍī, Bhairava, Gangā, Mahādeva, Parvatī/Maheśvarī, Ākāśa-Bhairavī, Varāha, Dakṣiṇakālī, Mahākālī	<i>Putavār</i>	Initiated by Amara Malla (1529–1560) #Wri205 #Has61
Panauti: Devī-pyākhah	<i>Mūdyah</i> : Mahākālī (+) <i>Deities/characters</i> : Bhairava, Mahākālī, Vārāhī, Devī (2 masks), Mahālakṣmī, Kumārī, Indrānī, Mahākālī, Gaṇeśa, Betal, Mahādeva, Viṣṇu Puca, Kauvā (skeleton, 2 masks), Digambara, Kyāg, Kica	not specified (previously <i>Kumārī</i> only?)	Initiated ? Restarted 1999 after a 35-year gap
Parphing: Kattī- (Kārtik-) pyākhah	<i>Mūdyah</i> : Mahālakṣmī (+) <i>Deities</i> : Gaṇeśa, (Dakṣiṇa-)Kālī, Mahālakṣmī, Kumārī, Indrānī, Nīlavārāhī, Bhairava, Mahādeva	<i>Balāmi</i>	Initiated by Siddhinarasiṃha Malla (1619-1661) (acc. to locals)

Notes

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the *International Folklore Congress* organised by the *Nepali Folklore Society* in Kathmandu, May 5–7, 2001; I would like to express my special thanks to Tulasi Diwasa and C.M. Bandhu, to whom I owe the initiative to write this paper.
2. The term ritual is here used in a restricted sense, referring to a sequence of physical or mental actions prescribed by tradition and addressing non-human entities.
3. The invocation part of the daily ritual mainly consists of *dhyāna* (mental concentration on the deity's gross, outer form) and *nyāsa* (invocation of the deity into one's own body) with the deity's *dhvani* or *bīja mantra*, the 'seed syllable', which induces the subtle form of the deity.
4. The materials underlying this paper were collected during my ongoing stay in Kathmandu since January 2000. This has allowed me to attend several masked dance performances, to collect opinions from the public and to hold interviews with some members of divine dance troupes and their attendants. I have seen on stage at least once the *gaṇas* of Khokana, Harasiddhi, the Theco and Bhaktapur Navadurgā, the Kathmandu Naradevī, the Patan Aṣṭamātrkā and Narasiṃha dances, Pharping, Sankhu, Halcowk, Bode and Tokha. Occasionally I could further witness some of the folkloric performances during the Kathmandu Indrajātrā and Bhaktapur Gājātrā. Detailed studies carried out in the past on several such performances were available to me. The results of consulting a varied assortment of *guthī* documents, manuscript catalogues and *vaṃśāvalis* are further taken into account. Finally I rely on discussions with people who, though at least in the narrow sense outsiders like me, have a much deeper insight into some of the performance traditions discussed here.

Technical terms, if not otherwise indicated, are given in Sanskrit, though they may be used in some modified spelling taken from vernacular languages. Newari terms are given in the most popular spelling only, despite the variety of alternatives circulating. Names of persons are given with diacritics, if they were encountered in vernacular languages only; if given in English spelling, they are reproduced in that writing.

I am very grateful to Philip Pierce for revising my English and notifying of further inconsistencies.

5. 'Folklore' or 'folk' are variably used when translating Nepali terms like *loka-sahitya*, *loka-gīti*, *loka-nāc*, *nāṭya-nṛtaka*, *loka-saṃskṛti*. Among local scholars, the terms are used to denote any kind of cultural production bound to a given community and as a category distinguished from classic dance-drama traditions, the latter mainly defined by including elements from canonical sources like the Nāṭyaśāstra or the Hastamuktāvalī (Śubhāṅkara 1969).
6. An overview of the masked dances within Newar tradition has, as far as known to me, only been ventured by Tulasi Divasa, and I am very grateful to him for having provided the pertinent articles to me. Gerard Toffin has investigated possession and masked dance traditions, with a focus on the Theco Navadurgā troupe, analysing the dances within a wider framework of Newar tantrism. Anne Vergati has contributed a study on masks and mask-making within the Kathmandu Valley.
7. To mention some: Robert Levy and Kedar Rājopādhyāya in *Mesocosm* describe their yearly cycle in the third part of their work titled "The dance of symbols", where they elaborately analyse the lunar, solar and goddess-related festivals in Bhaktapur. Niels Gutschow focuses on spatial orientations and conceptions of the two crucial goddess circles, the Aṣṭamātrkā and Navadurgā, and on their specific functions within the Bhaktapur tradition. Tordis Korvald wrote his M.A. thesis on the Navadurgā in Norwegian; in one of his articles, he elaborates on selected examples of the Navadurgā dancers' interaction with the audience (Korvald 1994). A recent study in Nepali by Puruṣottamalochan Śreṣṭha dealing with historical aspects, the yearly ritual cycle and the locally shaped tantric tradition at its base.
8. E.g. Jala-pyākhaḥ – Linda Iltis, Theco Navadurgā – Gerard Toffin, Kathmandu Bhadrakālī – Bert van den Hoek, Sankhu Devī-nāc – Bal Gopal Shrestha, Kirtipur Bhagbhairava-nāc – Reinhard Herdick, Khokana Rudrāyaṇī-Sikālī-pyākhaḥ – Silke Wolf (see bibliography).
9. A study of performance genres in Nepal and their history by Mrgendramansimha Pradhan is available in Nepali.
10. Several historical references to dance and drama performances are scattered in the *vaṃśāvalīs*. Three of these chronicles were translated separately by W. Wright, B.J. Hasrat and Dh. Vajrācārya/K.P. Malla; further published are the Devamālā-, Bhāṣa-, and Rājabhoga-vaṃśāvalī (see bibliography).

11. On the Kañkeśvarī and Raktakālī gaṇpyākhaḥ of Kathmandu, only historical references are left. The former was initiated by Amara Malla but soon discontinued (Wright 1990, 205, Hasrat 1970, 61–62); the latter is said to have been initiated by Siddhinarasiṃha (1619–1661) and Śrīnivāsa Malla (1661–1684).
12. See Wright 1990, 189. According to the historical account given by Shrestha (2000, 17), Bhūpatindra Malla gifted land and initiated a *guṭhī* to support the dance (the Wright chronicle and the Bhāṣavaṃśāvalī refer to the Bode dance as Mahālakṣmī-nāṭak).
13. The historical references assembled by Linda Iltis (1989, 147–150) prove its antiquity. They further show that this dance tradition experienced repeated interruptions and modifications down through the centuries.
14. A similar threefold allocation of the three goddesses is again found in the Devamālā chronicle, there ascribed to the initiative of Guṇakāmadeva, who flourished in the late 10th century (Divasa 1984, 8).
15. Regmi dates the beginnings of tantric worship back to the 10th or 11th century. Tantric deities, including the seven or eight *mātrkās* (Saptamātrkā, Aṣṭamātrkā) and the Daśamahāvīdyā, became very popular in the centuries to come. Many temples dedicated to groups of female deities, such as Kathmandu's eight Kālikās, Bhaktapur's Aṣṭamātrkā, and Patan's Aṣṭakumārī, belong to the 16th century (Regmi 1966, 576).
16. Skt. *Nāṭya-goṣṭhi* (Nep. *nāc-guṭhī*) denotes the organisational unit behind a performance. Among the Newar, it is only one of a variety of *guṭhis* that have been responsible for all kinds of social activities up to today.
17. These dramas are described in three papers published in *Pūrṇimā* (year 9, part 1), including quotes from the manuscripts relied on. Some of the dance and drama compositions are ascribed to the kings themselves.
18. In the Padmagiri chronicle, the Patan performances in Kārtik are recorded under the name of *Kṛṣṇalīlā* (Hasrat 1970, 69). Its present form dramatises several legends centring on the emanations (*avatāra*) of Viṣṇu, without focussing on Kṛṣṇa, though. Further, the selection of stories acted out is decided every year anew. On the background to this tradition see S. Lienhard in Kölver 1992, 227–234.
19. The Mahānkāl-nāc of Bhaktapur, also known as Mahākālī-pyākhaḥ or Tridevī-nāc, was initiated by Bhūpatindra Malla, a king devoted to arts, at the beginning of the 18th century.
Furthermore, the *devī-nāc* in its various forms, the Patan Narasiṃha-nāc, the Kathmandu Daśāvatara-nāc, the one or other *bhaila*-/ *bhakku*-

/bhairava-nāc and the *lākhe-nāc*, all performed mainly during Indraajātrā, Gāijātrā and Dasain, can be assigned to the entertaining category.

20. The fact that the *Hastamuktāvalī* by Śubhaṅkara, an elaborate Sanskrit handbook on *mudrās* and *padas* (hand- and foot postures) and their expressive meanings, was published by the National Archives in Kathmandu in 1969, substantiates the familiarity with Indian classical performance traditions.
21. For a methodological discussion of 'gliding definitions' see Gaenszle 2000.
22. For a number of highly artistic Indian dance traditions of the *bhārat-nāṭyam* kind, the perfected performance of the dancer is conceived as his or her devotional gift to the deity.
23. For an introduction to Indian classical dance traditions see Michaels and Baldissera 1988.
24. For some examples of *cārī* and *mudrā* in Nepalese dance see Pradhan 1985, 9–21.
25. For an overview of both philosophical and performative concepts of *līlā* in Indian traditions see Sax 1995.
26. The process of mask-making for the Bhaktapur Navadurgā has been described in some detail by Jehanne H. Teilhet (1978). Anne Vergati includes the same example in her study on masks and mask-making in the Valley (Vergati 2000, 123–133, with further references given). The pertinent knowledge is transmitted within the Citrakār families affiliated to the dance troupes. At present, the masks of the Bhaktapur Navadurgā, along with those of the Boḍe and the Pharping *gaṇas*, are all made by Pūrṇa Citrakār and his family. The ones used in Harasiddhi, Kokhana and Theco are commissioned from Patan, while the Kathmandu and Halcowk troupes have their own Citrakārs in town.
The mask-making is itself a ritual act and therefore bound up with many restrictions and ritual duties for the Citrakār involved (personal communication by Pūrṇa Citrakār, who kindly shared insights into the process of mask-making and its ritual links).
27. For the Bhaktapur Navadurgā see Vergati 2000, 123–133, and Teilhet 1978.

Several documents relating to the *Harasiddhi bāhra-varṣa-guṭhī* are preserved at the Guṭhī-saṁsthān in Kathmandu. One such document (file 453) from V.S. 1996 (1939) lists all the materials for the necessary rituals and related feasts as they were provided to the *guṭhī* responsible for the twelve-year performance. The sequence relating to the process of

manufacturing and progressive consecration of a set of new masks includes more than twenty ritual instances, including fire sacrifices, which were performed by the Citrakār craftsmen in Patan and by the *guṭhī* members themselves at various places in Patan and on the way back to Harasiddhi; for some rituals, a *Rājopādhyāya* priest was requested to perform on their behalf.

28. The Bhaktapur Navadurgā, the Kathmandu Bhadrakālī and Pachali dance troupes, and the troupe from Kirtipur burn their masks, whereas others keep and repair them, and even store them if replaced by new ones. Unique in this respect is the Halcowk tradition. There, after the completion of the twelve-year cycle, the masks are taken to the river for immersion during the monsoon (personal communication by the *naike*, the senior leader of the troupe).

The treatment of the masks is one key means of understanding the dance cycle as a whole. An elaboration of this would go beyond the limits of this paper, however. See, as an example in this direction, Bert van den Hoek's excellent paper on the final part of the Bhadrakālī twelve-year dance cycle and its interpretation.

29. Linda Iltis (1987, 205–211) has devoted part of her study on the Jala-pyākhaḥ to this topic.
30. Dietary rules may include abstaining from chicken meat, garlic and chilli peppers. One's hair may not be cut but is bound into a knot. Further possible restrictions include a partial prohibition of sex and limitations on social contact prescribed according to an intensified set of purity rules. The locality may not be left, and additional rituals may at times be prescribed.
31. The *kalaśa* (Skt./Nep.) is an earthen or metal water jar frequently used to invoke deities during ritual.
32. These items include a flag (Nep. *dhvaja*), a royal sceptre (Nep. *rājadaṇḍa*), oil-lit torches (Nep. *cirākh*), a ritual oil-lit lamp with a Gaṇeśa image (Nep./New. *sukundā*), and incense sticks or an earthen pot with hot charcoal for burning fragrant substances (Nep. *dhūpamakha*).
33. Nep./Skt. *gaṇa*, New. *kalaḥ* refers to the divine entourage of a specific deity. These are common terms used to designate the dancers' troupe.
34. A number of manuals relating to the Harasiddhi-pyākhaḥ are, exceptionally, available at the National Archives in Kathmandu. Some troupes, though they confirm that such texts exist, do not let them out of their hands.

35. *Jāt* refers to the social status group conferred by birth and associated with specific occupations. These latter are sometimes completely disregarded nowadays, though.
36. On the *guṭhī* as an organisational unit within Newar society see Gutschow 1982 or Levy and Rājopādhyāya 1992. Silke Wolf chiefly focussed her PhD study on the very complex organisational framework of the main yearly festival in Khokana village (about six miles south of Patan), of which the *Sikālī-pyākhaḥ* is the most important feature (available on microfiche from the author).
The *Guṭhī-saṃsthān* (also referred to as *Rāja-guṭhī*) is a governmental organisation founded in 1963 to secure financial and material support for rituals, festivals and temple *pūjās* deemed of general interest. Its income is still partly based on agricultural lands owned by the state. It is further allowed a state-approved budget.
37. For an inspiring account of local contexts, interpretations and meanings of the *mātrkās* see Hari Ram Joshi: *Eight Divine Mothers*, published in *Rolamba* 11.1, 1991 (3–11).
38. In Newari they are often addressed according to the main colour of their mask and dress (see Toffin 1996, 223). An identification with local, enshrined emanations of the *mātrkās* becomes obvious with *Kālī*. Even the public knows her as *Sikālī*, *Dakṣiṇakālī*, *Svetakālī* etc. depending on the location of the dance. As for *Theco*, all the deities personified are associated with a specific shrine within the Valley which they initially visit.
39. *Daitya* is here used as a proper name, whereas in other contexts it denotes a class of demons. Alternatively, the demonic characters are all called *rakṣasa*, a term referring to another class of demons.
40. Though this theme is inherent to most of the *pyākhaḥ* performances to some degree, variants of it are explicitly staged only by the *Kokhana*, *Naradevī* and *Harasiddhi* dancers. This episode further constitutes the final act of the *Bhadrakālī-pyākhaḥ* – with a big wooden mask as *Daitya* on stage instead of a human *Daitya*-dancer. The drunken buffalo chased out of town and then sacrificed on the tenth day of *Dasain* – a part of the yearly initial period of the *Bhaktapur Navadurgā* – is again understood as an enactment of the victory over the demoniac. The buffalo sacrifices performed on stage are but another facet of the same theme, and they are an integral part of the *Kokhana*, *Kathmandu Naradevī*, *Theco*, *Harasiddhi* and *Halcowk* performances.

41. The Lakhe is conceived of as a demonic being, but of benevolent character as long as he is not teased. He wears a red mask showing a fearsome expression and a black wig of matted locks, a red dress kept with a girdle and jingles, which announce his wild approaching and spontaneous movements in the street. He often appears as a *solo* performer during public festivals mainly of the summer season.
42. The Sankhu, Bode, Panauti, Pharping and Patan Aṣṭamāṛkā and Nārāsiṃha dancers do not perform with a *mūdyah* shrine installed while on stage. In Tokha, the festival litter displaying Manamāiju and her divine *gaṇa* is taken around and referred to as *mūdyah*.
43. Attempts at a univocal identification are of a hypothetical nature. For Bhaktapur see, for example, Gutschow 1996, 197, Mānandhar 1991, 14, or Korvald 1994, 408 – all of them tend to take the Navadurgā *mūdyah* as representing Mahālakṣmī, who is, according to Korvald, sometimes referred to as the lineage god of the deities impersonated. Mānandhar describes her as *ādiśakti devī*, the goddess of the highest level. The Naradevī *mūdyah* is conceived as the deity from which all the others emanate. It is regarded as beyond a specific sex or gross form. Worshipped daily by the Śvetakālī dancer in complete secrecy, it is seen to be the core deity of the Naradevī-*gaṇa* throughout the year (personal communication by Naradevī-guṭhī members).
As for the Theco *mūdyah*, an identification with Śiva, as suggested by Toffin (1996, 222), was denied by the dancers asked; further, they kept silent on the identity of the little silver mask attached to the *mūdyah* *kalaśa*, which depicts an animal face bearing traits of a monkey or a lion. One is reminded of tantric-philosophical concepts according to which all the subtle and gross emanations, both divine and mundane, derive from a single highest principle, conceived as a one- ,two- or threefold creative power.
44. The *mahāpātra* is an important attribute of the troupes that include the full set of the *māṛkagaṇa*. The conception of it as another emanation of the goddess (variously identified as Mahālakṣmī or Guhyeśvarī) adds an additional level of meaning to the whole of the *gaṇa*.
By contrast, each of the Manamāiju deities has its own *pātra*, which was explained to me as being merely an appropriate offering vessel.
45. Varieties of rice-beer (New. *thvoñ*, Nep. *jāñ*, *chyāñg*), an alcoholic drink, are prepared by many Newar households at festival times. The one to be served to the gods is a special variety of brown colour, which may have

been prepared in huge earthen jars by the *deutās* themselves in a ritual manner. The *thvoñ* jars are sometimes conceived as emanations of Bhairava, and decorated and worshipped accordingly.

46. This element is part of the Kokhana, Theco and Bhaktapur Navadurgā, Kathmandu Naradevī and Bhadrakālī performances.

47. Even the Patan Aṣṭamātrkā dancers, who otherwise abstain from any blood sacrifice during their performances, will twice offer a goat sacrifice to Nāsadyaḥ.

48. Such simplistic representation points up one of the basic concepts of the god of artistic creation and performing arts. The empty space is not just empty, but it symbolises the deity's relation to sound (Skt. *svara*). Within Indian philosophy, the original sound is understood as the root of any creative process. The medium of sound is *ākāśa*, the ether element or atmosphere. The original sound and its medium are the pre-requisites for the creation of (poetic) language and music.

A few temples, however, do display iconographic representations on the arch (*torāṇa*) of the shrine, which show Nāsadyaḥ with a Bhairava-like face and up to eighteen hands, sitting or standing on a bull as his vehicle.

On Nāsadyaḥ see Wegner 1992, 125–137, and Ellingson 1990, 221–272.

49. The *khīm* is the leading musical instrument. It is said to represent Mahākāla or some other male deity usually associated with Śiva (Toffin 1999, 244). Again not every *gana* has a *khīm* drum. They are not found among the Pharping, Tokha or Halcowk troupes, for example.

50. The instrumental equipment of the troupes differs a lot. Twenty-seven musicians are part of the Bode troupe, the Khokana *dyahkalah* has fifteen, while the Halcowk troupe has but three. When they go around town, the core instruments of the Bhaktapur Navadurgā are but two, namely the *dyah-tāḥ* and the *dyah-khīm*; these are at times joined by large cymbals (New. *kay*) and the *ḍamaru* hand-drum (see also Gutschow 1996, 213 and Manandhar 1991, 16).

51. In fact, nobody has so far identified this language for any of the troupes. As for the Khokana *dyahbāe*, it is definitely not Sanskrit, Nepali or contemporary Newari. It has dialogic elements sung by various key musicians with an intonation, that is of a mantric-syllabic rather than a prose character.

The night-long performance at Pharping is likewise accompanied by a number of songs. The divine language is said to be *dvāṃsa-bhāṣā* (Nep. 'mixed language'), and some of the locals who themselves had taken

interest in solving this question suggested that it may have its roots in medieval Maithili (personal communication by Viṣṇu Man Balāmi). Efforts to trace down the language used in the numerous songs of the Harasiddhi-pyākhaḥ did not result in their definite identification either, according to Rajendra Shrestha (personal communication).

In Theco, the musicians' voices at times join the sound of cymbals and horned drum, but here, no text or song-like pattern can be distinguished.

52. Each of the localities involved are strictly defined, and the dance platforms chosen are the traditional ones, in urban settlements sometimes distinguishable as elevated square stone platforms (Nep. *dabali*).
53. This double aspect of the relation between the goddess and the demon is explicit in the Kathmandu Naradevī and Bhadrakālī performances.
54. Note that the demon is not always embodied, nor does every troupe perform buffalo sacrifices on stage. For Halcowk and Bode, the goddess-overcomes-demon/lover plot is completely absent.
55. The *ṭols* are administrative and ritually relevant village or town units.
56. The *pañcabali* ('offering of five kinds') consists of five male sacrificial animals (rooster, duck, ram, he-goat, buffalo); also offered are plates with fruit, vegetables, a variety of sweets, grains of rice, beaten rice, cereals and various worship materials.
57. Personal observations, on March 9, 2001 and April 14, 2001.
58. Such practice can be observed during the Khokana, Harasiddhi and Theco performances.
59. Such is the practice in Kokhana and Theco. In Pharping the contributions are collected from the seven *ṭol* units rather than from individual households. In Harasiddhi, the meat of the abundant animal sacrifices is shared by the *deutās* and the villagers in equal parts, the former redistributing half of each sacrificial animal as *prasāda* to the offering family the day after.
60. A *kisli/kisali* (Nep./New.) is a small earthen bowl filled with unbroken rice, with an areca nut (Nep. *supārī*) and a coin on top. It is put on display in various Newar ritual contexts. The Sanskrit equivalent given is *pūrṇapātra*, which actually serves other ritual and symbolic purposes, though.
61. See above, note 42.
62. Personal communication.

These three goddesses, though originated within the Hindu classic pantheon, are frequently included into tantric teaching. They are here

- conceived as the first multiplying step of a primordial feminine principle, further evolving, in the local understanding, into the Sapta- and Aṣṭamātrkā, finally the Navadurgā. Each step implies one emanation of the goddess as a higher or essence form of the respective group.
64. See the article on the Patan Aṣṭamātrkā in *Sandhya times*, October 31, 2001.
65. These two goddesses have their temples on two hill-tops in the neighbourhood.
66. For the Bhaktapur Navadurgā, see, for example, the legends given by Gutschow and Bāsukala 1987, 137, and Levy 1987, 5–8; for Harasiddhi, see the legendary accounts summarised by Nutandhar Sharma 1999 in his research note; for Sankhu, see Shrestha, 1996, 257–258 and Shrestha 2000, 397–398. All such legendary accounts reveal interactions between selected humans – kings, tantrics, or otherwise outstanding personalities – and the gods.
67. See Pradhan 1985, 52. Buddhist dances like those featuring Mañjuśrī, Dīpaṅkara or Pañcabuddha, performed in the Kathmandu Valley up to today, may be said to belong to the same broad category.
68. Linda Iltis (1989, 147–150) has assembled the relevant passages from Regmi, Wright and Hasrat, and further from the Devamālā-, Bhaṣa- and Rājabhoga-vaṃśāvalis. The Jala dance was, as legend goes, first created by King Vikramāditya of Ujjain. It was Varadeva, a Thākuri leader, who is said to have afterwards successfully initiated the Jala-pyākhaḥ. Some centuries later, Amara Malla revived the tradition after it was interrupted. Again, Pratap Malla is reported to have reintroduced the dance after another interruption.
69. Devīnātha 1956, 123. See also Shrestha 2000, 17–18.
70. See Toffin 1984, 300–301.
71. Personal communication by Rameśvar Maharjan, son of the present Harasiddhi Kumārī-*devatā*. See also Sinyā 1991, 16.
72. With Harasiddhi-Devī being the *kuladevatā* ('family deity', a chosen deity specific to each Newar clan) of many Dulikhel Shrestha families, there is a strong interest on their part to continue the invitations, and to reward the dancers generously during their stay.
- According to the information provided to me by locals, the Harasiddhi-pyākhaḥ used to be shown continuously for three months every winter, whereas nowadays, the performances are limited to the first and the

concluding day of this period, which are the full-moon days of Mārgaśīrṣa (November-December) and Phālguna (February-March).

73. *Gaṇa pherne* ('regrouping of the divine troupe') is not strictly bound to a twelve-year cycle (Shrestha 2000, 45–49). It is initiated when one of the four Vārāhī dancers becomes possessed by the main deity. The *mūlguru* will then appoint the dancers, along with five extra characters. Only during such years did they use to go to outside places in Kārtik (October-November), in addition to the regular performances in Bode during the dark half of Bhādra (July-August).
74. Personal communication. See also Shrestha 1996.
75. Such points were brought up by Ratna Rāj Rājopādhyāya, with reference to Bhaktapur, and also by members of the Khokana, Theco and Harasiddhi troupes.
76. This is obvious in the case of Manamāiju, where only two persons are left to personify the deities. The ornaments and metal *kapālapātras* of three more deities are now taken around the village on a litter to be worshipped. Though not openly stated, a similar reason may explain why the Śvetakālī twelve-year cycle has not been staged at all for eighteen years; the present troupe mainly consists of elderly dancers perhaps unable to stand the physical strain anymore. Members of the troupe rather tend to reason that the present *kaliyuga* is a period too corrupted for gods to emanate (the elaborate cycle is initiated by one of the main deities's dancers becoming possessed).
77. In particular, *narabali* is said by the people to have been part of the Naradevī, Khokana, and Theco performances. Although the Theco Bhairava dancer asserted to me without asking that it was still practised during the twelve-year festival, it is doubtful on whether he was serious.
78. Such reactions, formerly based on an ill-defined fear, appear even more obsolete now that many locals have their own camera in hand. And everyone turns into an importunate beggar for pictures as soon as such an opportunity presents itself.
79. This tradition is obviously undergoing a process of redefinition, in an aim to create legitimization based on Newar-Buddhist teaching for a dance which features a *gaṇa* of deities that arose on a Hindu base. See, for example, the two articles published in *Sandhyā tājims*, October 30 and 31, 2001.
80. Articles on the Kārtik dance were recently published in some detail in *The Rising Nepal* and *The Kathmandu Post*, both on November 11, 2001, and

in *Gorkhāpatra* and *Kāntipur* on October 27 and November 23, 2002 respectively.

81. The *kalāpariśads* introduced in Thimi and Nagadesh provide further examples of a new organisational frame, in this case to the local *devī-nāc* performances displayed during *Gāiyātra* (personal communication by Rajendra Shrestha).
82. Historical accounts referring to dance performances during the Malla reign leave no doubt that dancers were paid in goods and money for their performances if invited by the palace. (Vajrācārya 1996, 15, and Pradhan 1985, 50). An update of such a practice, with respect to household economies increasingly depending on income-creating activities, might enhance a regular compensation of the performers according to their time investment.
83. Personal communication by Bālakṛṣṇa Prajāpati, who is one of the three dance *gurus*, all of whom in their youth were members of the dance troupe that performed up to 1965.
84. This overview does not include the performances on stage of an entertaining character and the *devī-nāc*, *bhaila-pyākhaḥ* and *lakhe-pyākhaḥ* performances still practised in the Kathmandu Valley mainly during the spring and summer festivals.
The names of the divine members of each troupe are given but in one writing, without the local variants being taken into account.

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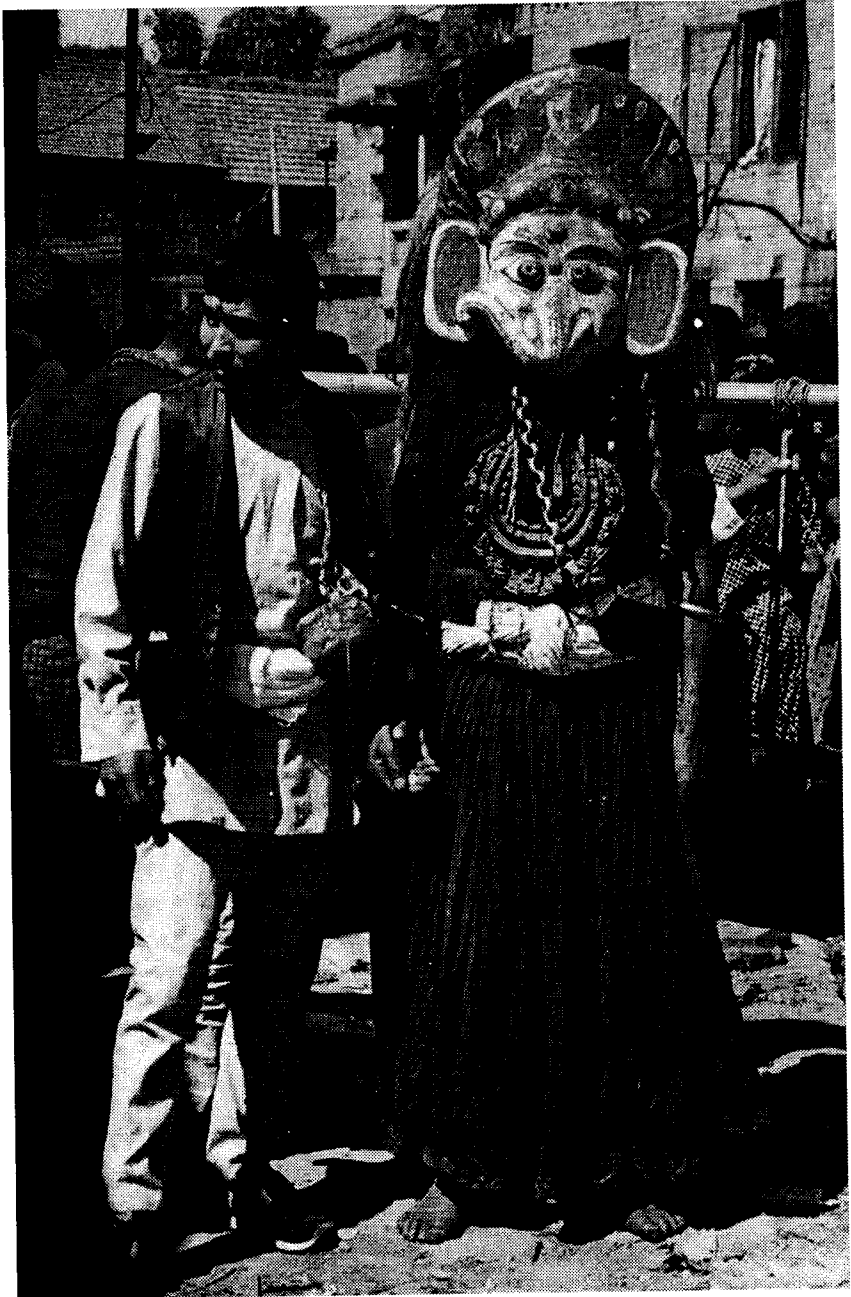
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Theco Navadurgā-pyākhah: the Gaṇeśa *deutā* with his *nāyo*



Theco Navadurgā-pyākhah: Siṃhā, Dumhā and Bhairava dancers with their masks, awaiting the distribution of *mohanī-sinha* by the Gaṇeśa *deutā*



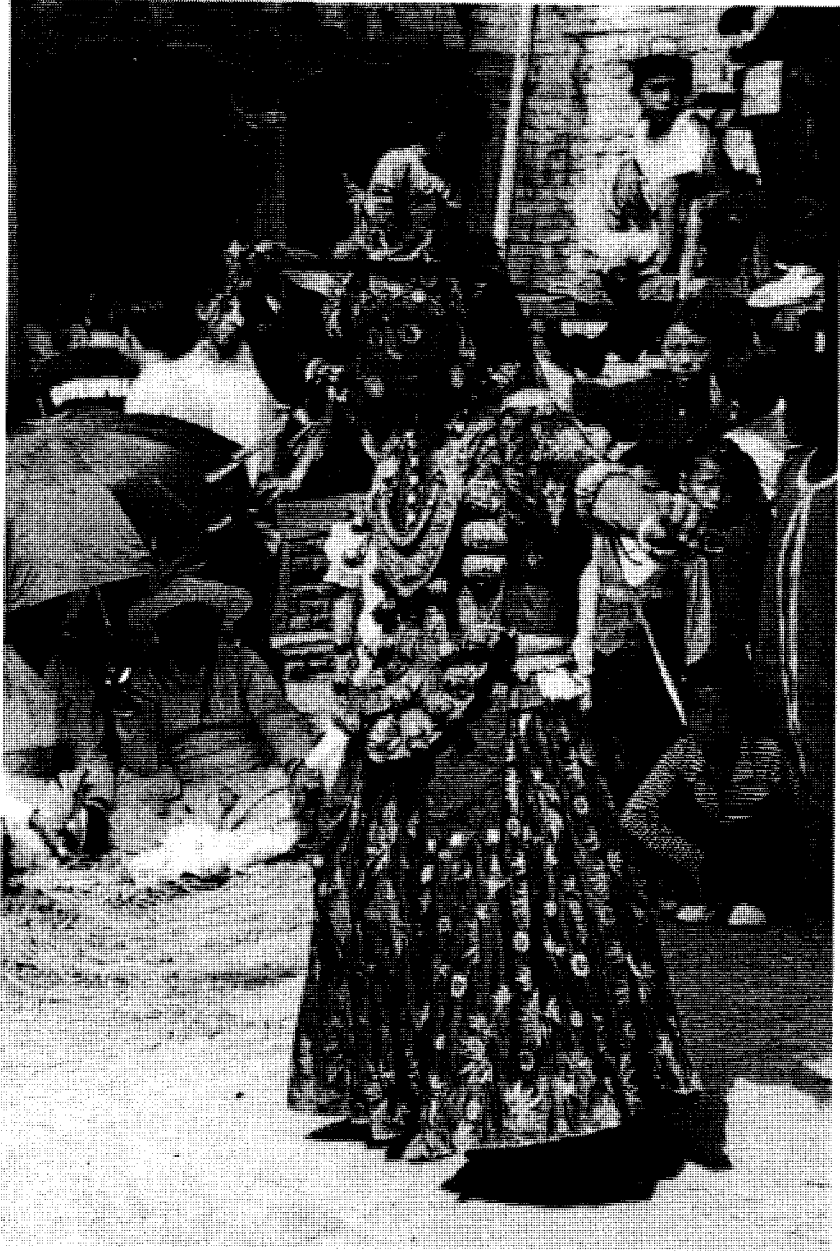
Theco Navadurgā-pyākhah: Vārāhī offers rice-beer in the scull bowl to Rudrāṇī



Khokana Sikālī-pyākhaḥ: performance venue in the village



Halcowk Ākāśabhairava: street scene with Ākāśa-Bhairavī displaying her bow and arrow; to her left, Parvatī/Maheśvarī, and to her right, Varāha and Dakṣiṇakālī



**Khokana Sīkāli-pyākhaḥ: Kumārī dances in
her full garb displaying her sword**



Halcowk Ākāśabhairava: street scene with Gangā, Mahādeva and
Pārvatī/Maheśvarī



Kathmandu Naradevī-pyākhah: dance scene with Kumārī and Śvetakālī



Bode Nīlavārāhī-pyākhah: the four Vārāhī-dancers during procession
worshipped by the public



Patan Aṣṭamāṭṛkā: Vārāhī during a rest

नेपालको सन्तुलित विकासको सन्दर्भमा विकेन्द्रित शासन व्यवस्थाको अवधारणा^१

दुर्गाप्रसाद पौड्याल

पृष्ठभूमि

२०१९ सालको संविधानले मुलुकलाई १४ अञ्चल तथा ७५ जिल्लामा विभाजन गरी विकेन्द्रित शासन व्यवस्थालाई सोही अनुरूप व्यवस्थित गरेको थियो । राजनैतिक पक्षमा गाऊँ, जिल्ला तथा राष्ट्रिय पंचायतहरूको व्यवस्था गरी एक तहबाट अर्को तहमा चुनिएर जाने व्यवस्था भएकोमा संविधानको तेस्रो संशोधनपछि राष्ट्रिय पंचायतका सदस्यहरू बालिग मताधिकारका आधारमा निर्वाचित हुने व्यवस्था मिलाइएको थियो भने प्रशासनिक पक्षमा जिल्ला तहमा प्रमुख जिल्ला अधिकारी तथा अंचल तहमा अंचलाधीशहरूलाई केन्द्रीय प्रशासनको प्रतिनिधिको रूपमा पदस्थापन गरिएको थियो । विषयगत मन्त्रालयहरूको हकमा जिल्ला तहका कार्यालयहरूलाई जिल्ला पंचायत सचिवालयको “शाखा” भनिए तापनि प्रशासकीय नियन्त्रणमा भन्दा समन्वयमा राखिएको थियो भने तिनीहरूको सुपरिवेक्षण गर्नका लागि अंचल स्तरीय कार्यालयहरू पनि थिए । चौथो पंचवर्षीय योजना पश्चात् हिमाल, पहाड र तराई क्षेत्रको अन्तरनिर्भरतालाई मध्यनजर राखी क्षेत्रीय विकासको अवधारणालाई अधि सारियो र मुलुकलाई ५ विकास क्षेत्रमा विभाजन गरी सोही अनुरूप क्षेत्रीय तहका कार्यालयहरूको स्थापना गरियो ।

तर पंचायती व्यवस्थाको केन्द्रीकृत मूल्य, मान्यता तथा निर्दलीय चरित्रका कारण बढी भन्दा बढी राजनैतिक कार्यकर्ताहरूलाई विभिन्न तहका पंचायती निकायहरू तथा यस अन्तर्गतका वर्गीय संगठनहरूमा आवद्ध गरी “विकास कार्यक्रम”हरूमा समेटनु राजनैतिक बाध्यता थियो भने यसको नियन्त्रण र निर्देशन केन्द्रीय तहबाट हुनु स्वाभाविक थियो । अझ पंचायती व्यवस्थालाई थाम्ने प्रमुख खम्बाहरूमा स्थानीय तहका पंचायती तथा वर्गीय संगठनहरू तथा तिनीहरूलाई संचालन गर्ने निजामति प्रशासन भएकोले गर्दा तिनीहरू अन्तर्गत संचालित विकास कार्यक्रमहरूका गुणस्तर जाँच्ने, पारदर्शिताको अवलम्बन गर्ने गराउने तथा भ्रष्टाचारीलाई कारवाही गर्ने जस्ता कार्यहरू जोखिमपूर्ण थिए । बरु “विकास”लाई बढी भन्दा बढी कार्यकर्ताहरूलाई बाँडेर तिनीहरूलाई पंचायत मूलधारमा समेटनु नै राजनैतिक रूपमा लाभदायक थियो । पंचायती व्यवस्थाको विकेन्द्रीकरण नीति

यिनै आधारभूत मान्यताहरूबाट संचालित थियो भने यस अन्तर्गत स्थापित स्थानीय निकायहरू केन्द्रबाट नियन्त्रित र निर्देशित संस्थाहरूको रूपमा विकास गरिएका थिए । त्यसैले स्थानीय तहको विकास कार्यक्रममा सीमित पंचायती कार्यकर्ताहरूको हालीमुहाली भई जनताको ठूलो हिस्सा विकासको पहुँच र पकडदेखि बाहिर रहेको थियो । फलतः जनता आक्रोशित भई पंचायती व्यवस्थाको विरुद्धमा उत्रिए र २०४६ सालको जन आन्दोलनले पंचायती शासन व्यवस्थाको अन्त्य गर्‍यो ।

प्रजातान्त्रिक व्यवस्थाको स्थापनापछि जारी गरिएको 'नेपाल अधिराज्यको संविधान २०४७' ले देशको सार्वभौमसत्ता जनतामा स्थापित गरी "सामाजिक राजनैतिक एवं आर्थिक न्याय" प्रदान गर्ने उद्देश्य लिएको छ । यस संविधानमा विकेन्द्रित संरचनाहरूको स्पष्ट खाकाको उल्लेख नगरी सांकेतिक रूपमा राज्यका निर्देशक सिद्धान्तहरूमा उल्लेख गरिएबाट सार्वभौम जनताबाट वैधानिक रूपमा चुनिएका जनप्रतिनिधिहरू भएको संसदबाट देश, काल, परिस्थिति सुहाउँदो राज्य संचालन नीति एवं व्यवस्था विकास गर्दै लैजाने लचिलो एवं गतिशील प्रकृया सोचिएको हुनसक्छ । तत्पश्चात् गाउँ/नगर/जिल्ला समिति ऐन २०४७ लागू गरियो जुन मूलतः साविकका स्थानीय पंचायतहरूको नाम परिवर्तन गरी स्थानीयस्तरको संरचनालाई निरन्तरता दिइएको मात्र थियो ।

२०५३ सालमा प्रधानमन्त्रीको अध्यक्षतामा एउटा उच्चस्तरीय विकेन्द्रीकरण समन्वय समितिको गठन भयो । उक्त समितिले जनउत्तरदायी स्थानीय सरकारको संरचना, आर्थिक स्वायत्तता, योजनावद्ध विकास प्रकृया, कर्मचारी व्यवस्थापन, क्षमता विकास तथा कार्यान्वयन रणनीतिमा ठोस प्रस्तावहरू प्रस्तुत गरेको थियो । त्यस प्रतिवेदनका आधारमा तयार पारिएको भनिएको स्थानीय स्वायत्त शासन ऐन २०५५ मा फराकिलो संगठनात्मक संरचना, अधिकारको निक्षेपण, महिला तथा पिछडिएका समुदायबाट मनोनयनको व्यवस्था, योजनावद्ध विकास प्रकृया, न्यायिक अधिकार जस्ता प्रावधानहरू समावेश भएका छन् । तर विगत १२ वर्षको विकेन्द्रित शासन व्यवस्थाको शैलीलाई हेर्ने हो भने स्थानीय निकायहरूमा दलीय राजनीतिको संकीर्ण खिँचातानी तथा मन्त्री, सांसद, राजनैतिक दलहरू, गैरसरकारी संस्थाहरू तथा दातृ संस्थाहरू आ-आफ्नो स्वार्थपूर्तिका लागि श्रोत, साधन र अवसरहरूको लुछाचुँडीमा मात्र सीमित भएका देखिन्छन् जसबाट "विकास" हुनुको सट्टा एउटा अन्यौल र अराजक स्थितिको सृजना भएको छ । त्यसमाथि विगत ७ वर्षदेखि निरन्तर चलीरहेको माओवादी जनयुद्धका क्रममा भएका आतंक, हिंसा-प्रतिहिंसा एवं समानान्तर गाउँ/इलाका/जिल्ला जनसरकारका कृयाकलापहरूले विकेन्द्रित संरचनाहरू तहस नहस भएका छन् । हालै प्रकाशित एउटा तथ्यांक अनुसार अधिराज्यका जम्मा ३९१५ गा.वि.स.हरू मध्ये हालसम्म २१३४ वटा गा.वि.स. भवनहरू (भण्डै ५५ प्रतिशत) ध्वस्त वा क्षतिग्रस्त भएका छन् भने ३५-जना गा.वि.स. पदाधिकारीहरू मारिएका, ३२ जना अपहरित भएका तथा १४ जना घाइते भएका छन् (देशान्तर साप्ताहिक २१ पुष २०५९) ।

केही समय यता चाहे दातृ समुदायको सहायतामञ्चमा होस् वा संकटकाल अनुमोदन गर्ने प्रतिवद्धतामा होस् अथवा संविधान संशोधन गर्ने कुरामा होस्, विकेन्द्रित शासन

व्यवस्थालाई सुदृढ गर्ने कुराले उच्च मान्यता पाएको छ । तर राज्यले कस्तो विकेन्द्रित शासन प्रणाली अपनाउन खोजेको हो भन्ने बारे स्पष्ट अवधारणा आउन सकेको देखिँदैन । अझै पनि विकेन्द्रित शासन व्यवस्थालाई संविधानको निर्देशक सिद्धान्तमा परिलक्षित श्रोत र साधनको न्यायोचित वितरणबाट मुलुकका विभिन्न क्षेत्र तथा जात-जातिका बीचमा रहेको आर्थिक एवं सामाजिक असमानता हटाउने एक प्रमुख नीतिको रूपमा भन्दा पंचायतकालील शैलीमा केन्द्रबाट जि.वि.स., गा.वि.स. मार्फत “विकास बाँड्ने” पद्धतिलाई निरन्तरता दिन खोजेको देखिन्छ । कसरी राज्यका साधन, श्रोत र अवसरहरूलाई मुलुकका सबै नागरिकहरूको पहुँचमा पुऱ्याउने ? कसरी क्षेत्रगत संभावनाहरूको खोजी गरी तिनीहरूको उच्चतम आर्थिक प्रयोगबाट रोजगारी तथा उत्पादन बढाई जनताको जीवनस्तर सुधार्ने ? यी कामहरूमा स्थानीय निकायहरु, विशेषगरी जनप्रतिनिधिहरूको भूमिकालाई कसरी परिभाषित गर्ने ? भन्ने जस्ता मुद्दाहरूमा चिन्तन भएको देखिँदैन । प्रस्तुत कार्यपत्रमा विगतका अनुभवहरूलाई केलाएर यस्तै अवधारणात्मक मुद्दाहरूमा विचार गर्ने प्रयास गरिएको छ ।

विकेन्द्रित विकासको अवधारणा

देशको भौगोलिक, वातावरणीय, जात-जातीय तथा भाषा-भाषीय विविधताले गर्दा राजधानीबाट यन्त्रवत संचालित विकास कार्यक्रमहरूले समग्र मुलुकको विकास हुन सक्दैन भन्ने तथ्य पंचायत कालमा नै प्रष्ट भैसकेको हो । त्यसैले २०४६ सालको जनआन्दोलन पश्चात विगतको अनुभव तथा व्यापक छलफलका आधारमा तयार पारिएको नेपाल अधिराज्यको संविधान २०४७ ले मुलुकको सन्तुलित विकासबाट सामाजिक, राजनैतिक तथा आर्थिक न्याय प्राप्त गरी लोक कल्याणकारी राज्यको स्थापना गर्ने उद्देश्य लिएको हो । उक्त उद्देश्य प्राप्तिका लागि संविधानले राज्यका केही निर्देशक सिद्धान्तहरू प्रतिपादित गरेको छ जसमा सामाजिक न्यायका आधारमा आर्थिक श्रोत, साधन तथा उपलब्धिको न्यायोचित वितरण गर्ने, आर्थिक एवं सामाजिक असमानता हटाउने तथा विकेन्द्रीकरणको माध्यमद्वारा जनतालाई शासनमा आधिकाधिक मात्रामा सम्मिलित गराउने आदि कुरा पर्दछन् । यी सिद्धान्तहरूको परिपालनाका लागि तय गरिएका राज्यका नीतिहरु मध्ये सबै क्षेत्रको सन्तुलित विकास गरी सबै क्षेत्रका जनताको, विशेष गरी महिला, बालबालिका, अशक्त तथा आर्थिक एवं सामाजिक रूपले पछि परेका जनजातिहरूको, शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य, आवास र रोजगारी जस्ता कुराहरूको विकास गर्नु, कृषि क्षेत्रमा उत्पादकत्व बढाई कृषिमा आधारित जनताको उन्नति गर्नु तथा ग्रामीण विकासको गतिलाई तीव्रतर बनाउँदै लैजानु जस्ता विषयहरु पर्दछन् । यस संविधानले परिकल्पना गरेको लोक कल्याणकारी राज्य स्थापनाका लागि अवलम्बन गरिने प्रमुख नीतिहरू मध्ये विकेन्द्रीकरण एक हो ।

बदलिँदो परिस्थिति सुहाउँदो विकेन्द्रित शासन व्यवस्थाको अवधारणा, स्वरूप, तहगत व्यवस्था र कार्यक्षेत्रहरू निर्धारण गरी स्थानीय निकायहरूलाई सुदृढ र जनमुखी तुल्याउने उद्देश्यले २०५३ सालमा प्रधानमन्त्रीको अध्यक्षतामा गठित उच्च स्तरीय विकेन्द्रीकरण

समन्वय समितिले विकेन्द्रीकरणलाई केन्द्रले वा कुनै निकायले गर्ने गरेका केही कार्यहरू वा केही रकम-कलम स्थानीय निकायहरूलाई सार्ने प्रयास जस्तो सीमित दायराले मात्र नहेरी विकेन्द्रित शासन प्रणालीको फराकिलो दृष्टिकोणबाट हेर्नु पर्ने ठहर गरेको थियो । विकेन्द्रित शासन व्यवस्थालाई “स्थानीय जनताको सम्मति अनुकूल बहुदलीय प्रजातन्त्रको संस्थागत विकास गर्दै स्थानीय क्षेत्र र जनजीवनलाई जनताकै सहभागिता र स्थानीय श्रोतको परिचालनबाट विकास र समुन्नति गर्नका निमित्त निक्षेपित विषयमा स्वतन्त्रतापूर्वक निर्णय गर्ने अधिकार स्थानीय स्वायत्त सरकारमा निहित हुने पद्धति” भनी परिभाषित गरेको थियो । उक्त समितिले दिएको प्रतिवेदनमा निम्न सुझावहरू प्रस्तावित गरिएका थिए ।

- **जन-उत्तरदायी स्थानीय सरकार :** गाविस तथा नगरपालिकाबाट प्रत्यक्ष निर्वाचित जिल्ला विधायिकाहरूबाट जिल्ला सभाको गठन हुने र उक्त सभाले निर्वाचित गरेका पदाधिकारीहरूबाट जिल्ला विकास समितिको गठन हुने, त्यस्तै स्थानीय तहमा पनि विधायिकाबाट निर्धारित प्रकृया पूरा गरि कार्यकारिणी निकायको कुनै पनि पदाधिकारीका विरुद्ध अविश्वास प्रस्ताव पारित गरी हटाउन सकिने व्यवस्था, कार्यकारी क्षेत्रमा स्थानीय निकायहरूको अधिकार क्षेत्रभित्र आएका विषयगत जिल्ला कार्यालयहरूको छुट्टै अस्तित्व समाप्त गरी स्थानीय स्वायत्त सरकारको सचिवालयको समेत काम गर्ने प्रमुख जिल्ला विकास अधिकारीको मातहतमा राख्ने ।
- **आर्थिक स्वायत्तता :** स्थानीय तहका आर्थिक साधन र श्रोतको पहिचान र निर्धारण गर्न सक्ने हैसियत तथा परिचालन गर्न चाहिने सम्पूर्ण अधिकारहरू स्थानीय सरकारलाई निक्षेपण गर्ने । त्यस्तै स्थानीय सरकारको अधिकार क्षेत्रलाई कटौती गर्ने विषयगत निकायका ३६ वटा ऐनहरूलाई संशोधन गरी ऐन/नियमको कार्यान्वयनमा एकरूपता ल्याउने ।
- **योजनाबद्ध विकासको पद्धति :** स्थानीय सरकारहरू अधिकार, साधन र श्रोत सम्पन्न भएपछि त्यस्को उपयोग पिछडिएको क्षेत्र, वर्ग तथा जात-जातीको अधिकतम विकासका लागि होस भन्ने उद्देश्यले स्थानीय संभावनाहरूको पहिचान गर्ने तथा सो अनुरूपका योजना तर्जुमा, कार्यान्वयन, अनुगमन तथा मूल्यांकन गर्ने पद्धतिको विकास गर्ने ।
- **स्थानीय सेवा आयोगको गठन :** स्थानीय तहमा आवश्यक पर्ने कर्मचारीको दरबन्दी सृजना गर्ने अधिकार उनीहरूलाई नै सुम्पिए पनि कर्मचारी भर्ना गर्दा योग्यता निर्धारण, छनौट लगायत सेवाका शर्तहरूमा एकरूपता एवं निष्पक्षता ल्याउने व्यवस्थाका लागि छुट्टै ऐनको व्यवस्था गरी एउटा स्वतन्त्र स्थानीय सेवा आयोगको गठन गर्ने ।
- **क्षमता विकास :** स्थानीय तहका भौतिक पूर्वाधार, मानवीय संसाधन तथा व्यवस्थापकीय क्षमताको विकास गरी तिनीहरूलाई निक्षेपित अधिकार वहन गर्न सक्ने तुल्याउन स्थानीय विकास क्षेत्रमा खर्च हुने रकमको कम्तिमा १० प्रतिशत खर्च गर्ने । त्यस्तै ऐन

नियमको कार्यान्वयन तदारुकताका साथ गराउन एउटा उच्चस्तरीय अनुगमन समितिको गठन गर्ने ।

उक्त प्रतिवेदन अनुसार तयार पारिएको भनिएको स्थानीय स्वायत्त शासन ऐन २०५५ को प्रस्तावनामा जनतालाई शासन प्रकृत्यामा अधिकाधिक मात्रामा सम्मिलित हुने अवसर जुटाउन आफ्नो क्षेत्रको विकासका लागि साधनको परिचालन, विनियोजन र विकासको प्रतिफलको सन्तुलित तथा समान वितरण गर्न, योजनावद्ध विकास प्रकृत्यालाई संस्थागत गर्न, जवाफदेही स्थानीय निकायहरूको संस्थागत विकास गर्न र स्थानीय नेतृत्वको विकास गरी दैनिक जन जीवनमा असर पार्ने विषयहरूमा निर्णय गर्न सक्ने गरी स्थानीय स्वायत्त शासन पद्धतिको विकास गर्ने कुरा उल्लेख गरिएको छ । उक्त प्रस्तावनाको भावनालाई समेट्नका लागि ऐनले निम्न सिद्धान्त तथा नीतिहरू तय गरेको छ ।

- स्थानीय निकायहरूलाई सक्षम र प्रभावकारी बनाउन आवश्यक पर्ने अधिकार, जिम्मेवारी र श्रोत साधनलाई निक्षेपण गर्ने ।
- स्थानीय निकायमा स्थानीय जनताका लागि सोच्ने र जवाफदेही वहन गर्न सक्ने संस्थागत संयन्त्र र कार्यगत संरचनाको निर्माण गरी विकास गर्ने ।
- स्थानीय निकायहरूलाई सुम्पिएका काम, कर्तव्य र जिम्मेवारी वहन गर्नका लागि आवश्यक पर्ने श्रोत र साधनहरू संकलन र परिचालन गर्न अधिकार सुम्पने ।
- स्थानीय निकायहरूलाई निक्षेपित कार्य गर्दा प्रजातान्त्रिक प्रकृत्या, पारदर्शी व्यवहार, जन उत्तरदायित्व र जनताको सहभागितामा आधारित नागरिक समाजको स्थापना गर्ने तर्फ उन्मुख गराउने ।
- स्थानीय नेतृत्वको विकास गर्नका लागि स्थानीय निकायलाई आफ्नो क्षेत्रका जनताप्रति उत्तरदायी बनाउन प्रभावकारी संयन्त्रको व्यवस्था गर्ने ।
- दीगो विकासको नीति अनुरूप सेवा प्रदान गर्ने कार्यमा स्थानीय स्वायत्त शासनमा निजी क्षेत्रलाई सहभागी हुन प्रोत्साहित गर्ने ।

संविधानको मर्म अनुरूप अथवा संविधानले प्रतिपादन गरेका राज्यका निर्देशक सिद्धान्त र नीतिहरूको भावना तथा उच्च स्तरीय विकेन्द्रीकरण समन्वय समितिले दिएको प्रतिवेदन अनुरूप यो ऐन बनेको छ कि छैन ? यस ऐनकै प्रस्तावनाको आशयलाई तथा ऐनले अवलम्बन गरेका सिद्धान्त र नीतिको भावनालाई समेट्ने गरी स्थानीय स्वायत्त शासन पद्धतिको निर्माण गरिएको छ कि छैन भन्ने कुराहरू आफ्नै ठाउँमा छन् । तर पनि जे जस्तो रूपमा ऐन बनेको छ त्यसको कार्यान्वयन पक्षलाई हेर्दा अहिलेको शासन व्यवस्था पंचायतकाल भन्दा तात्त्विक रूपमा भिन्न हुन सकेको छैन । अभै पनि स्थानीय निकायहरूलाई अधिकार निक्षेपण गरिएपनि केन्द्रीय सरकारले समानान्तर कार्यक्रमहरू, बजेट वक्तव्य, सांसद कोष तथा तोक आदेशद्वारा “विकास” बाँड्ने गरेकै छ । अहिले पनि

त्यसैगरी विषयगत मन्त्रालयहरूले आफ्ना स्थानीय कार्यक्रमहरूलाई जिल्ला परिषदबाट “पास” गराएर विषयगत कार्यक्रमहरूलाई “विकेन्द्रित” गराएकै छन् भने स्थानीय निकायहरू सम्पूर्ण बजेट र कर्मचारीको खटन-पटन आफैले गर्न नपाएसम्म “बलियो” भएको ठान्दैनन् । तर त्यसरी विषयगत शाखाहरू जि.वि.स.को मातहतमा राख्दैमा समस्याको समाधान हुँदैन । ती शाखाहरूमा कसले कर्मचारीको व्यवस्थापन गर्ने ? क्षेत्रीय तथा केन्द्रीयस्तरमा रहेको विषयगत दक्षताको उपयोग कसरी गर्ने ? तिनीहरू मार्फत खर्च हुने बजेट रकम कोबाट कसरी विनियोजित हुने र को प्रति जवाफदेही हुने ? केन्द्रीय मन्त्रालयहरूका क्षेत्रगत उद्देश्य तथा लक्ष्यहरू कोबाट कसरी कार्यान्वयन गर्ने ? क्षेत्रगत विविधता तथा विषमतालाई कसले कसरी समायोजन गर्ने ? केन्द्रीय संरचनामा कस्तो परिवर्तन हुनु पर्ने ? निजी, गैर सरकारी तथा दातृ संस्थाहरूलाई कहाँ र कसरी उपयोग गर्ने ? यस्ता यावत प्रश्नहरूको उत्तर अहिले पनि स्पष्ट भएको देखिँदैन ।

प्रमुख मुद्दाहरू

प्रजातन्त्रको स्थापनापछि विकेन्द्रित विकासका निमित्त चालिएका कदमहरूबाट मुलुकको सन्तुलित विकासमा तात्त्विक सुधार हुन सकेन किनभने तिनीहरू पनि पंचायतकालीन मूल्य, मान्यता तथा कार्यशैली भन्दा माथि उठ्न सकेनन् । नीति निर्माताहरू “केन्द्रबाट कति दिने ?” भन्ने मानसिकताबाट मुक्त हुन सकेनन् भने केन्द्र स्वयं अव्यवस्थित र अन्यौलग्रस्त रह्यो । त्यस्तै अधिकार कसलाई दिने ? त्यसको संरचना, कार्यशैली तथा मूल्य मान्यता कस्तो हुनु पर्ने ? पद्धतिको निर्माण कसरी गर्ने ? प्रतिनिधिमूलक तथा कार्यकारी निकायहरू बीचको तालमेल कसरी मिलाउने ? यस्ता सवालहरूमा निरन्तर अनुगमन, खोजी, चिन्तन, छलफल तथा अभ्यास गर्ने परिपाटी बसाइएन । जे जति प्रयासहरू भएका छन् ती पनि निहित स्वार्थका लागि यन्त्रवत रूपमा भए र निरर्थक सावित भए । समयमा भन्दा, विकेन्द्रित विकासका सन्दर्भमा माथि औल्याइएका मुद्दाहरूलाई निम्न ती भागमा विभाजित गर्न सकिन्छ ।

(क) बैचारिक मुद्दाहरू

(अ) विकेन्द्रीकरण राजनैतिक मुद्दा हो : हाम्रो जस्तो विविधताले भरिएको देशमा शासन व्यवस्थाको विकेन्द्रीकरण राजनैतिक मुद्दा बन्न सक्नु पर्दछ । तर विगतमा शासन व्यवस्थाको संचालन विधि, साधन श्रोत र अवसरहरूको न्यायोचित वितरण, सन्तुलित विकास, स्थानिय साधन तथा श्रोतको उचित परिचालन तथा पिछडिएको क्षेत्र, वर्ग, जात-जातिहरूको विकास जस्ता सवालहरूमा राजनैतिक तहबाट सोच विचार गरिएको देखिँदैन । हुनत यी सवालहरूलाई राजनैतिक दलहरूले अमूर्तरूपमा आ-आफ्ना घोषणापत्रहरूमा राख्ने गरेता पनि कार्यगत रूपमा संसदमा छलफल गरी छिनोफानो गर्ने परिपाटी बसेको छैन । त्यस्तै संविधानको भाग ४ मा राज्यका निर्देशक सिद्धान्त तथा नीतिहरूमा पनि यी कुराहरूको

स्पष्ट उल्लेख भएता पनि संविधानको भाग ८ र ९ मा उल्लेखित कार्यविधि अपनाउँदा राज्यका निर्देशक सिद्धान्त तथा नीतिहरूलाई “मुख्य मार्गनिर्देशक” का रूपमा लिइएको पाइँदैन । साँच्चै भन्ने हो भने, विगत १२ वर्षहरूमा संसद मुख्यतः सरकार बनाउने र ढाल्ने गणितीय खेलमै सीमित रहेको देखिन्छ । सांसदहरूले पनि शासन व्यवस्थाको आधारभूत चरित्रलाई नै परिवर्तन गरी साधन तथा अवसरहरूको न्यायोचित वितरण गर्ने प्रयास गर्नु भन्दा सांसद विकाश कोषमा रकम वढाउने, निजी प्रयासबाट राष्ट्रिय योजना आयोग वा सम्बन्धित मन्त्रालय मार्फत आफ्नो क्षेत्रमा योजना हाल्ल लगाउने तथा प्रभावशाली अधिकारीको तोक आदेश मार्फत साधन वितरण गराउने प्रयास गरेको पाइन्छ ।

वास्तवमा विकेन्द्रित शासन व्यवस्थालाई स्थानीय विकास मन्त्रालयको “कार्यक्रम” का रूपमा लिने गरेको पाइन्छ । अझ केही समय यता UNDP को सहयोगमा संचालित “स्थानीय स्वायत्तशासन कार्यक्रम” जस्ता कार्यक्रमहरूले विकेन्द्रीकरणलाई जनमानसमा विदेशी सहायताद्वारा संचालित कार्यक्रमका रूपमा चिनाएको छ भने दाताहरूबाट संचालित यस्ता कार्यक्रमहरूका समानान्तर संरचना एवं प्रकृयाहरूले स्थानीय निकायहरू अझ पराधीन, निरीह र कमजोर भएका देखिन्छन् । त्यस्तै विषयगत मन्त्रालयहरूका आ-आफ्नै विकेन्द्रीकरण नीतिहरू छन् जसलाई साधारणतया जन सहभागिताद्वारा संचालन गरिने स्थानीय स्तरका कार्यक्रमहरूका रूपमा लिइन्छ । त्यस्तै गा.वि.स./नगरपालिका/जि.वि.स.हरूलाई स्थानीय विकास मन्त्रालय ‘अन्तर्गत’ का संस्थाहरूको रूपमा विकास गरिएको हुँदा विषयगत मन्त्रालयहरू, गैर सरकारी संस्था तथा दातृ संस्थाका कार्यक्रमहरूलाई सम्बन्धित तहमा ‘पास’ गराई अथवा सम्बन्धित तहका पदाधिकारीलाई ‘परामर्श समिति’ मा समावेश गराई कार्यक्रमलाई “विकेन्द्रित” बनाउने चलन छ ।

तर विकेन्द्रित शासन व्यवस्था भनेको सरकारी वा दातृ संस्थाको पैसाबाट चल्ने ‘आयोजना’ होइन । यो राज्य संचालनको एउटा पद्धति हो जसलाई राजनैतिक तहबाट बुझ्नु, परिकल्पना गर्नु तथा सोही अनुरूपको शासन पद्धतिको विकास गर्नु पर्दछ । राजनैतिक तहबाट देखाएको दृढतालाई राम्रो ढंगले नीति तर्जुमा, संचालन, अनुगमन तथा मुल्याङ्कन गर्ने काममा विज्ञ तथा दातृ संस्थाहरूले मद्दत पुर्‍याउन सक्छन् । तर अहिले यहाँ ठीक उल्टो भईरहेको छ । विज्ञहरू राखेर विकेन्द्रीकरण नीति तयार पारिन्छ अनि दातृ संस्थाहरूबाट त्यही आधारमा साधनको परिचालन गरिन्छ तर मुख्य हुनु पर्ने राजनैतिक प्रतिवद्धता छँदैछैन । उल्टो तिनै राजनैतिक शक्तिहरू विकेन्द्रीकरण नीति प्रति सशक्त र भयभीत देखिन्छन् । वास्तवमा मुलुकमा हाल देखिएको विकृति र विसंगतिको अन्त्य गर्नका लागि विकेन्द्रित शासन व्यवस्थाको माध्यमद्वारा देशका सबै भू-भागमा सरकारको संगठित उपस्थिति, साधनको सन्तुलित बाँडफाँट, समुदायस्तरमा जनचेतनामूलक कार्यक्रम तथा उत्पादन र रोजगारी बढाउने अवसरहरूको सृजनाबाट मात्र संभव छ । यो वास्तविकतालाई सबै राजनैतिक दलहरूले राम्ररी बुझ्ने हो भने मात्र राष्ट्रिय सहमतिको आधारमा बृहत दृष्टिकोण लिई विकेन्द्रित शासन पद्धतिको थालनी हुन सक्छ । यसका विषय सूचीहरू पनि अहिलेका लागि गौण हुन । विगतका अनुभवले के देखाउँछन् भने जवसम्म राजनैतिक

शक्तिहरू प्रतिवद्ध हुँदैनन् तबसम्म विशेषज्ञहरूबाट तयार पारिएको जतिसुकै राम्रो 'प्याकेज कार्यक्रम' पनि काम लाग्दो हुने रहेनछ ।

(आ) तहगत भूमिका: विकेन्द्रीकरणको अवधारणालाई सामान्य रूपमा केन्द्रलाई अधिकार शून्य बनाएर स्थानीय तहलाई अधिकार सम्पन्न बनाउन खोजिएको भन्ने बुझियो, जुन सत्य होइन । वास्तवमा विकेन्द्रीकरणको अर्थ हो सम्पूर्ण अधिकार एकै ठाउँमा केन्द्रीकरण नगरी स्थानीय, क्षेत्रीय तथा केन्द्रीय तहको भूमिकालाई परिभाषित गर्नु, त्यसो हुँदा तल्लो तहलाई निक्षेपित गरिएको अधिकारलाई कार्यान्वयन गर्नलाई माथिल्लो निकायले कस्तो भूमिका खेल्नु पर्ने हो सो को स्पष्ट रेखाङ्कन गर्नु । उदाहरणका लागि राज्यका प्रमुख दायित्वहरू मध्ये सबै नागरिकहरूलाई राज्यबाट प्राप्त हुने सेवा सुविधाहरू जस्तै शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य, खानेपानी, बाटोघाटो आदि पुर्‍याई उनीहरूको जीवनस्तर उठाउनु पर्ने दायित्वलाई हचुवाको भरमा स्थानीय निकायहरूलाई सुम्पेर राज्य व्यवस्था पछि बस्न सक्दैन । बरु यी क्षेत्रहरूको सुविधा सबै नागरिकहरूलाई पुर्‍याउनका लागि केन्द्रीय र स्थानीय निकायहरूको भूमिकालाई कसरी सन्तुलित गर्ने भन्ने नै विकेन्द्रित विकासको मुख्य प्रश्न हो । जस्तै स्कूल, अस्पताल, खानेपानी, सिंचाई, बाटोघाटो निर्माण तथा संचालनका लागि स्थानीय श्रोत र साधन परिचालन गर्न स्थानीय निकायहरू सक्षम हुन सक्छन् भने तिनीहरूको लागि आवश्यक पर्ने विशेषज्ञता, तालिम तथा अनुसन्धानहरूका लागि क्षेत्रीय तथा केन्द्रीय तहमा भर पर्नु पर्ने हुन सक्छ । त्यसैले यी क्षेत्रहरूका अधिकारहरू स्थानीय निकायहरूलाई सुम्पेमा वा विषयगत जिल्ला कार्यालयहरू स्थानीय निकायहरूमा गाभ्दैमा कसरी विकेन्द्रीकरण हुन सक्छ ?

त्यस्तै विकेन्द्रित विकास प्रकृत्यामा राष्ट्रिय/अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय गैर सरकारी तथा दातृ संस्थाहरूको कस्तो भूमिका हुनु पर्छ भन्ने स्पष्टता नभएकाले तिनीहरूले आफ्नो कार्यक्रमको वैधता लिनकै लागि आ-आफ्नै ढंगले स्थानीय निकायहरूसँग सम्झौता गरी कार्यक्रम संचालन गर्ने गरेका छन् । विगत केही समय यता निजी क्षेत्रको संलग्नतामा विशेष जोड दिइएको भएता पनि यसको भूमिकाका बारेमा स्पष्ट धारणा देखिदैन । त्यसैले स्थानीय विकासमा संलग्न सबै क्षेत्रको भूमिकाको स्पष्ट परिभाषा गरिनु पर्छ । उदाहरणका लागि यो क्षेत्रगत/तहगत भूमिकालाई निम्न तरिकाले परिभाषित गर्न सकिन्छ ।

(इ) केन्द्रीय संरचनामा तात्त्विक सुधार: "सिंहदरवारमा भएको अधिकारलाई गाउँ तहसम्म लैजाने" भन्ने मान्यताबाट विकेन्द्रीकरण नीतिलाई बुझ्ने गरिएको छ । केन्द्रीय संरचना तथा शासन व्यवस्था सक्षम भएको अवस्थामा यो मान्यता सत्य हुन सक्थ्यो होला । तर हाम्रो मुलुकमा केन्द्र स्वयं असक्षम, छरपष्ट र अन्यौलग्रस्त छ । उदाहरणका लागि मन्त्री परिषदको दृष्टिकोण र महत्वपूर्ण नीति निर्णयहरू प्रधानमन्त्रीका विश्वासपात्र केही "प्रभावशाली" मन्त्रीहरू बाहेक अरूलाई थाहा हुँदैन । प्रधानमन्त्रीले संसदसामू गरेको 'क्रान्तिकारी कदमहरू'को घोषणाको विरोध सबैभन्दा पहिले सत्तारुढ दलले गर्छ । "सोर्सफोर्स" भएका केही व्यक्तिहरूले मन्त्रालयहरूमा हालिमुहाली गरीरहेका हुन्छन् भने

तालिका १: स्थानीय विकासमा संलग्न विभिन्न क्षेत्रहरूको तहगत भूमिका

क्षेत्र	स्थानीय तह	क्षेत्रीय तह	राष्ट्रिय तह
सरकारी	स्थानीय विधिपट्टा एवं आवश्यकताको पहिचान, कार्यान्वयन, अनुगमन, उपयोग तथा मर्मत सभार	- क्षेत्रीय श्रोत संभावना तथा अन्तर निर्भरताको अध्ययन एवं पहिचान - मानव श्रोत व्यवस्थापन - अनुगमन तथा मूल्याङ्कन	- राष्ट्रिय नीतिहरूको निर्माण एवं परिमार्जन - मानव श्रोत उत्पादन तथा व्यवस्थापन - अनुगमन, अनुसन्धान तथा गुणस्तर निर्धारण - दातृ संस्था परिचालन तथा समन्वय
नगर सरकारी	पिछडिएका क्षेत्र तथा जातजातीहरूलाई संगठित एवं जागरुक तुल्याई शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य, सरसफाई, वातावरण सुधार तथा स्वरोजगारमूलक सुलभ ऋण जस्ता क्षेत्रहरूमा साधन र अवसरहरूको पहुँच समुदाय स्तरमा पुर्याउने	- कार्यकर्ताहरूलाई तालिम - अनुगमन तथा अनुसन्धान	- दृढ संस्थासँग समन्वय गरी साधनको परिचालन - स्थानीय अनुभवको आधारमा नीतिगत विचार-विमर्श एवं पैरवी
अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय नगर सरकारी तथा दातृ संस्था	कार्यक्रम अनुगमन तथा मूल्याङ्कन	कार्यक्रम अनुगमन तथा मूल्याङ्कन	- दुर्गम तथा पिछडिएका क्षेत्र तथा वर्गमा काम गर्ने संस्थालाई आर्थिक मद्दत - अनुसन्धान, आवश्यकता पहिचान, प्रविधि विकास तथा प्रसार, मानव संसाधन विकास तथा पूर्वाधार विकासमा आर्थिक एवं प्राविधिक सहयोग
निजी	- बैंक, सरकार वा दातृ संस्था समेतको सहयोगमा स्थान विशेषको संभावना अनुसार उद्योग/व्यवसाय स्थापना एवं संचालन - गुणस्तरीय निर्माण गर्ने संस्थागत विकास	- क्षेत्रीय तहमा संभावना एवं बजारको खोजी एवं विस्तार - गुणस्तरीय निर्माण एवं परामर्श सेवा	- औद्योगिक, व्यावसायिक, आयात, निर्यात जस्ता नीति निर्माण एवं परिमार्जनमा सरकारसँगको सहकार्य - वैदेशिक लगानीकर्ता वा दाता सँगको सहकार्यमा औद्योगिक एवं व्यावसायिक क्षेत्रमा लगानी गरी रोजगारी को अभिवृद्धि - गुणस्तरीय निर्माण एवं परामर्श सेवा

एउटै मन्त्रालयभित्रका महाशाखा तथा विभागहरूभित्र समन्वय पाइदैन । अनि विकेन्द्रित अधिकार कहाँबाट निश्चित हुने हो ? त्यस्तै, विकेन्द्रीकरण ऐन मार्फत केही अधिकार तथा कर्तव्यहरूलाई स्थानीय निकायहरूलाई निक्षेपण गरेपछि सोही अनुरूप केन्द्रीय स्तरको संरचना तथा काम कर्तव्यमा परिवर्तन हुनु पर्ने होइन र ? त्यसैले विकेन्द्रीकरण योजनाको कार्यान्वयन सँगसँगै केन्द्रीय संरचना तथा शासन व्यवस्थामा तात्त्विक सुधार हुनु उत्तिकै आवश्यक छ ।

केन्द्रीय तहको संरचनात्मक सुधार गर्दा दुइवटा महत्वपूर्ण पक्षहरु छन् । पहिलो, केन्द्रीय संरचनाहरु अवस्थित भएको राजधानी शहर काठमाडौँका आफ्नै विशिष्टता एवं संभावनाहरु छन् । त्यसैले स्थानीय निकाय वित्तीय आयोगको प्रतिवेदन २०५७ ले समेत सिफारिस गरेको राजधानी शहरको अथवा काठमाडौँ उपत्यकाको (काठमाडौँ उपत्यकालाई एक जिल्ला मानेर) छुट्टै संरचनाको निर्माण गर्ने । दोस्रो, माथि (आ) को चार्टमा उल्लेख भएअनुसार केन्द्रीय तहको भूमिकामा परिवर्तन भएपछि सोही अनुरूपको केन्द्रीय संयन्त्र निर्माण गर्ने । यस प्रसंगमा तल (ई) मा उल्लेख भए अनुसार क्षेत्रीय कार्यालयहरूलाई विभागीय अधिकार प्रत्यायोजन गरेर केन्द्रीय संरचनालाई सानो एवं चुस्त बनाउन सकिन्छ ।

(ई) क्षेत्रगत अन्तरनिर्भरता: विकेन्द्रीकरणको संस्थागत संरचनालाई कागजमा कोरेको चार्ट जस्तो केन्द्रबाट सबै जिल्लाहरूमा समानान्तर रेखाहरू कोर्न खोजिएको छ जसले हाम्रो जस्तो विभिन्न प्रकारका विविधतालाई समेट्न सक्दैन । एकै प्रकारको समय तालिका, विशेषज्ञता र कार्य विभाजन सबैतिर काम लाग्दैन । तराई क्षेत्रमा कुनै योजना कार्यान्वयन गर्न उपयुक्त समयमा हिमाली क्षेत्र हिउँमा पुरिएको हुन्छ । अझ, एउटै भौगोलिक क्षेत्रका दुई जिल्लाका वास्तविकताहरु मेल खाँदैनन् जस्तो हुम्ला र ताप्लेजुङ्ग दुवै हिमाली क्षेत्रका जिल्लाहरू हुन भने भुपा र बर्दिया दुवै तराई क्षेत्रका जिल्लाहरू हुन् । तर तिनीहरूका समस्या र संभावनाहरू आ-आफ्नै किसिमका छन् । त्यसैले किन सबैतिर एकै किसिमको कार्यालय, कर्मचारी तथा कार्य तालिका चाहियो ? एउटा निश्चित कार्य पद्धतिको आधारमा प्रत्येक जिल्लाको वस्तुस्थितिको अध्ययन गरेर तथा त्यहाँका बासिन्दाहरूसँगको सरसल्लाह अनुसार स्थान सुहाउँदो संस्थागत संरचना, विशेषज्ञता तथा कार्यतालिका बनाउन किन नपाउने ? त्यस्तै हिमाल, पहाड र तराईका क्षेत्रीय अन्तरनिर्भरता तथा सम्बन्धहरूलाई तथा एउटै जिल्लाभित्रका गा.वि.स. बीचको अन्तर सम्बन्धलाई कसरी उजागर गर्न सकिन्छ भन्ने सोच हुनु उत्तिकै आवश्यक छ । यसमा पनि विगत २५ वर्षदेखि क्षेत्रीय कार्यालयहरू संचालनमा रहेका र केही समयअघि सचिव स्तरीय क्षेत्रीय प्रशासक पनि नियुक्त भईसकेको परिप्रेक्षमा आ-आफ्नो विकास क्षेत्रको वस्तुस्थिति अनुसार कार्य संचालन गर्न सक्ने गरी क्षेत्रीय तहमा विभागीय अधिकार प्रत्यायोजन गर्न सकिन्छ । त्यसो हुँदा केन्द्रीय तहमा केवल मन्त्रालयहरूले नै नीतिगत कार्यहरू गर्न सक्छन् । यसरी हेर्दा नेपालको परिप्रेक्षमा विकेन्द्रित संरचनाको निर्माण गर्दा सुस्पष्ट खाका भन्दा पेन्सिलले कोरिएको स्पष्ट तर आवश्यकता अनुसार मेट्न पनि सकिने लचिलो संरचना बढ्ता लाभदायक हुनसक्छ ।

(उ) केन्द्रीकृत चरित्र तथा राहतमुखी कार्यक्रम: हालसम्म पनि स्थानीय निकायहरूलाई केन्द्रबाट स्वीकृत वजेट तथा कार्यक्रमहरूलाई कार्यान्वयन गर्ने निकायका रूपमा लिने गरिन्छ भने स्थानीय निकायहरू स्वयंले पनि केन्द्रबाट बढि भन्दा बढि रकम निकासा गराई विकास गर्ने सपना देखेका हुन्छन् । दैवी प्रकोप वा विपत्तिका वेलामा केन्द्रले पठाएको 'राहत सामाग्री' बाँड्ने काममा पनि स्थानीय निकायहरू नै परिचालित हुन्छन् । त्यस्तै गैर सरकारी वा दातृ निकायहरू पनि आफुले बनाएका आयोजनाहरूलाई स्थानीय निकायहरूबाट 'पास' गराएर आफ्ना कार्यक्रमहरूलाई विकेन्द्रित बनाएका हुन्छन् । त्यसैले स्थानीय निकायहरूलाई सक्षम बनाउने विभिन्न कार्यक्रमहरूका प्रगति प्रतिवेदनहरूले जे सुकै देखाएता पनि स्थानीय निकायहरूको केन्द्र वा दातृ निकायहरूप्रतिको साधन र श्रोत माथिको निर्भरता बढ्दो छ । वास्तवमा, विगतका आर्थिक ऐन एवं नियमहरू तथा संस्थागत संरचनाहरू केन्द्रबाट नियन्त्रित र निर्देशित तथा केन्द्र प्रतिनै जवाफदेही हुनुपर्ने मूल्य र मान्यतामा बनेका र विकसित भएका छन् । त्यसैले स्थानीय निकायहरूमा मात्र होइन विषयगत निकायहरूमा समेत वजेट तर्जुमा, कार्यान्वयन तथा लेखा नियन्त्रण एवं परिक्षण गर्ने कुराहरूमा संसद, विषयगत मन्त्रालय, विभाग, क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय तथा जिल्ला कार्यालय स्तरहरूमा कसरी नियन्त्रण र निर्देशन गर्ने एवं कसरी पारदर्शिता एवं जवाफदेहिता लाई परिभाषित गर्ने जस्ता कुराहरूमा चिन्तन हुनु जरूरी छ ।

वास्तवमा विकेन्द्रित शासन व्यवस्था सन्तुलित विकासका लागि आर्थिक कार्यक्रम पनि हो । स्थान विशेषका संभावनाहरूको अधिकतम उपयोगबाट स्थानीय रोजगारी तथा आमदानी बढाउन केन्द्र, क्षेत्र तथा स्थानीय तहको संयुक्त प्रयासबाट मात्र संभव छ । यसरी स्थानीय तहमा उत्पादन बढेपछि स्थानीय निकायहरूको पनि आमदानी बढ्छ, उनीहरूको केन्द्रप्रतिको आर्थिक निर्भरता घट्छ र केन्द्रको व्ययभारलाई अन्य विकास कार्यमा प्रयोग गर्न सकिन्छ । के जुम्ला, सप्तरी र इलामलाई एउटै स्वरूपको विकास चाहिएको छ ? इलामले ६ वटा "अ" को उत्पादन गरी आमदानी बढाउन सक्छ भने उचित सहयोग र प्रोत्साहन पाएमा अरु जिल्लाले अन्य क्षेत्रमा उत्पादन बढाउन किन सक्दैनन् ? त्यसैले स्थानीय निकायहरूलाई केन्द्रले पठाएको विकास अनुदान खर्च गर्ने, राहत सामाग्री बाँड्ने वा तोक आदेशको कार्यान्वयन गर्ने संस्थाको रूपमा नभएर स्थान विशेषको आवश्यकता पहिचान गर्ने, संभावनाहरूको खोजी गर्ने, स्थानीय श्रोत साधनको परिचालन गर्ने तथा क्षेत्रीय तथा केन्द्र तहसंगको साम्प्रदायीमा रोजगारी तथा उत्पादन बढाउन सक्ने जनप्रतिनिधिमूलक संस्थाको रूपमा विकास गर्नु पर्छ । त्यस्तै विषयगत कार्यक्रमहरू पनि आ-आफ्नो क्षेत्रका स्वतन्त्र कार्यक्रमको रूपमा नभएर एकीकृत जिल्ला विकास कार्यक्रमको विषयगत कार्यक्रमका रूपमा सञ्चालित एवं समन्वित गरिनु पर्दछ ।

(ख) संरचनात्मक मुद्दाहरू

(अ) संगठनात्मक स्वरूप: स्थानीय निकायहरूको संगठनात्मक स्वरूप प्रजातान्त्रिक र जवाफदेहिमूलक हुन सकेको छैन । उदाहरणका लागि स्थानीय तहमा साधन श्रोतको

परिचालन र व्यवस्थापनमा जि.वि.स.को महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका हुने गर्छ । जि.वि.स.को संगठनात्मक स्वरूपलाई हेर्ने हो भने सभापति तथा उप-सभापति जिल्ला भरिका गाउँ/नगर परिषदका निर्वाचित सदस्यहरूबाट र जि.वि.स. सदस्यहरु सम्बन्धित इलाकाका गाउँ/नगर परिषदका निर्वाचित सदस्यहरूबाट निर्वाचित हुन्छन् । तर त्यसरी निर्वाचित जि.वि.स. पदाधिकारीहरूले गरेका काम कारवाहीमा अनुगमन गर्ने, मूल्याङ्कन गर्ने तथा कारवाही गर्ने संस्थागत अधिकार निर्वाचक मण्डलसँग हुँदैन । त्यसैले जि.वि.स. (त्यस्तै गा.वि.स. तथा नगरपालिका समेत)का पदाधिकारीहरू एक पटक निर्वाचित भईसकेपछि तोकिएको अवधिभर निर्वाध रूपमा काम गर्न पाउँछन् । त्यस्तै सबै पदाधिकारीहरू व्यक्तिगत रूपमा छानिने र सदस्यहरूको तुलनामा सभापति उप-सभापतिले बढी क्षेत्र एवं मतदाताको प्रतिनिधित्व गर्ने हुँदा जि.वि.स. संसदीय शैलीमा संस्थागत ढंगले संचालन नभई सभापति/उप-सभापति (मुख्य रूपमा सभापति) को नियन्त्रण र निर्देशनमा राष्ट्रपतीय ढंगबाट संचालित हुन्छ । त्यसैले जि.वि.स.को संस्थागत संरचना तथा कार्यगत शैली अनुत्तरदायी र तानाशाही किसिमको जस्तो देखिन्छ ।

स्थानीय तहमा 'विधायकी' र 'कार्यकारिणी' यी छुट्टा छुट्टै निकायहरूको स्थापना गर्नुको साटो समिति (अर्थात हालको कार्यकारिणी) लाई नै सुदृढ गरी नीतिगत जिम्मेवारी लिनसक्ने संस्थाका रूपमा रूपान्तरण गर्न सकिने कुरा अगाडिको प्याराग्राफमा प्रष्ट पार्न खोजिएको छ । डा. हर्क गुरुङ (हिमाल, फागुन २०५८) ले सिफारिस गर्नु भए जस्तो विद्यमान ७५ जिल्लाहरूलाई समायोजन गरी २५ जिल्लामा भर्ना गर्ने हो भने प्रत्येक जिल्लाको विद्यमान 'इलाका'बाट जि.वि.स. सदस्य निर्वाचित हुने व्यवस्थालाई कायमै राखी 'समिति'को विस्तार गर्न सकिन्छ । साथै समितिका सदस्यहरूले आफुमध्येबाट सभापति तथा उप-सभापतिको निर्वाचन गर्ने व्यवस्था गर्दा जि.वि.स.मा महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निर्वाह गर्ने पदाधिकारीहरू 'समिति' प्रति जवाफदेही हुने हुन्छन् । यसरी जिल्ला विकास समिति नियमित रूपमा मासिक बैठक बस्न सक्ने जवाफदेहीमूलक संस्था बन्न सक्छ ।

(आ) नीति निर्माण र कार्यकारी संरचना : स्थानीय स्वायत्त शासन संरचनाको निर्माण गर्दा केही मात्रामा केन्द्रीय संरचनाको नक्कल गर्ने प्रयास गरिएको देखिन्छ अर्थात नीति निर्माणका लागि बृहत प्रतिनिधिमूलक विधायिकी "सभा" र दैनिक कार्य संचालनका लागि कार्यकारिणी "समिति" । केही समय यता स्थानीय निकायका प्रमुखलाई मासिक तलब समेतको व्यवस्था गरी "कर्मचारीकरण" गरिएबाट सम्बन्धित तहका "समिति" को प्रमुखलाई कार्यकारी प्रमुखको रूपमा स्थापित गराउन खोजेको देखिन्छ । तर स्थानीय निकायहरूको आय श्रोतलाई हेर्दा "सभा" को बैठक मुश्किलले वर्षमा एक पटक गराएर सचिवालयबाट तयार पारिएका कार्यक्रमहरूलाई "ल्याप्चे" लगाउने प्रकृया पुर्‍याउनसम्म पनि गाह्रो भएको अवस्थामा विधायिकाले नीतिगत सवालहरूमा छलफल गर्ने, समितिको कार्यशैलीलाई अनुगमन गर्ने, मार्ग निर्देशन गर्ने र कारवाही समेत गर्ने भन्ने अधिकार पनि छैन र संभव पनि देखिँदैन । सभामा हुने छलफलहरू मुख्य रूपमा आफ्नो भाषामा के कति पत्रो भन्ने

भागबण्डाकै सवालमा सीमित रहने गर्छ । त्यसैले यो संरचनात्मक व्यवस्था त्यतिको प्रभावकारी हुन नसकेको देखिन्छ ।

स्थानीय तहमा पनि 'विधायिका' र 'कार्यकारिणी'लाई छुट्टा छुट्टै राख्ने हो भने 'उच्चस्तरीय विकेन्द्रीकरण समन्वय समिति २०५३' ले सिफारिस गरे अनुसार गा.वि.स. अध्यक्षको निर्वाचनसँग उही प्रकृयाबाट प्रत्येक गा.वि.स.बाट जिल्ला विधायकहरू निर्वाचित हुने र जिल्ला विधायकी सभा प्रति उत्तरदायी हुने गरी उनीहरूबाटै कार्यकारिणीको छनौट हुने व्यवस्था मिलाइनु पर्छ । साथै केन्द्रमा जस्तै जिल्ला विधायकी सभाको नियमित बैठक हुनु पर्ने र त्यसका विभिन्न समितिहरू क्रियाशील भई कार्यकारिणीका कामहरूको नियमित अनुगमन एवं मूल्याङ्कन गर्ने व्यवस्था हुनुपर्छ । त्यसो गर्दा स्थानीय स्वायत्त सरकारले "प्रान्तीय सरकार"को रूप लिन पनि सक्नेछ । तर एकात्मक सरकार अन्तर्गतका स्थानीय स्वायत्त संस्थाहरू केन्द्रीय सरकारसँगको साभेदारीमा स्थान विशेषका आवश्यकताहरूको अधिकतम उपयोगबाट त्यहाँको उत्पादन, रोजगारी तथा आम्दानी बढाउने उद्देश्य राख्ने हो भने चाहिँ "विधायकी सभा"को संभवतः आवश्यकता नै पर्दैन ।

अभ् महत्वपूर्ण कुरा, गाउँ/नगर/जिल्ला विकास समितिहरू कार्यकारिणी हुन् भने सम्बन्धित तहका सचिवालयहरू तथा श्री ५ को सरकारका विषयगत कार्यालयहरू के हुन् ? स्थानीय विकास अधिकारी जिल्ला स्थित कार्यकारी निकायहरूको समन्वयकर्ता होइन र ? स्थानीय निकायहरूले स्थानीय संभावनाहरूको पहिचान गर्ने, स्थानीय श्रोत साधनहरूको परिचालन गर्ने तथा वार्षिक कार्यक्रम अनुमोदन गरी विषयगत कार्यालयहरूद्वारा गुणस्तरीय ढंगले कार्यान्वयन गराउनु पर्ने होइन र ? किनकि विषयगत निकायहरूसँग विशेषज्ञता हुन्छ, कार्यान्वयन गर्ने प्रविधि हुन्छ अनि संस्थागत नियन्त्रण र जिम्मेवारी हुन्छ । त्यस्तै कार्यकारी निकायहरूले गुणस्तरीय ढंगले काम गरेका छन् छैनन्, जन-सहभागिता परिचालन गरिएको छ वा छैन तथा साधनको कतै दुरुपयोग त भएको छैन ? भनी अनुगमन, मूल्याङ्कन तथा कारवाही गर्ने अधिकार, नीति-निर्माणतह अर्थात् समितिलाई दिनु पर्छ । यसो हुँदा जनसरोकार र विशेषज्ञताको समायोजन हुन सक्छ । यस नीतिगत र कार्यकारी पक्षलाई तलको तालिकामा देखाउने प्रयास गरिएको छ ।

तालिका २: स्थानीय तहको नीतिगत तथा कार्यकारी पक्ष

अवस्था	नीतिगत पक्ष	कार्यकारी पक्ष
योजना तर्जुमा	- पद्धतिको विकास - साधन श्रोत र संभावनाहरूको खोजी - योजना तर्जुमा पद्धतिको आधार तयार पार्ने - राष्ट्रिय नीतिहरूसँगको तालमेल - कार्यकारी पक्षबाट तयार पारिएको योजनामा छलफल तथा अनुमोदन	- निर्धारित पद्धतिको अनुशरण गरी सम्बन्धित विषयगत कार्यालयले योजना तयार पार्ने - साधन र श्रोतको आकलन गरी बजेट तयार पार्ने - कार्यक्रम र बजेट छलफलको लागि नीतिगत तहमा लैजाने
कार्यान्वयन	<u>पद्धतिको अनुगमन:</u> - कार्यान्वयनमा पद्धतिको अनुशरण भयो भएन - साधनको उचित उपयोग भयो भएन - गुणस्तर राम्रो भयो भएन - प्रकृया पारदर्शी भयो भएन	<u>पद्धति अनुशरण गरी कार्यान्वयन गर्ने:</u> - कार्य योजना तयार - रकमको विनियोजन तथा खर्चमा पारदर्शिता - गुणस्तर कायम - निरन्तर अनुगमन तथा निरीक्षण
मूल्याङ्कन	<u>पद्धतिको मूल्याङ्कन एवं परिमार्जन:</u> - पद्धतिमा भएका त्रुटि केलाउने - साधनको दुरुपयोग भएमा कारवाही गर्न सिफारिस - पद्धतिमा परिमार्जन गर्न पहल	<u>प्रगति समीक्षा:</u> - खर्च एवं प्रगति प्रतिवेदन तयार - नीतिगत तहमा समीक्षा एवं मूल्याङ्कन - सिफारिस बमोजिम भ्रष्टाचारी ऊपर कारवाही गर्ने

(ग) कार्यान्वयनका मुद्दाहरू

(अ) तोक आदेशबाट साधनको विनियोजन: फाइलमा सम्पूर्ण प्रकृया मिलाइएको देखिएता पनि व्यवहारमा एउटा कार्यालयको पियनको नियुक्तिदेखि लिएर महत्वपूर्ण योजनाको छनौट/स्वीकृतिसम्म तोक आदेशबाट नै हुने गरेको देखिएको छ । तोक आदेश गर्ने अधिकारीले न त कुनै पद्धति वा प्रकृयाको अनुशरण गर्नु पर्छ न त त्यसप्रति कुनै जिम्मेवारी नै लिनु पर्छ । यो चलन वास्तवमा पंचायती संस्कार हो जुनवेला जिल्ला सभापति वा प्रधानपञ्चले आफ्ना “पञ्च कार्यकर्ता”हरूलाई तोक आदेशबाट साधन वा अवसरहरूको बाँडफाँड गर्ने गर्थे । त्यसै चलनलाई हाल पनि निरन्तरता दिइएको छ । स्थानीय निकाय वित्तीय अयोगको प्रतिवेदन २०५७ ले स्थानीय निकायहरूबाट निवेदनको भरमा औषधी-उपचार, खेलकूद, शैक्षिक सामग्री, चियापान, विभिन्न क्लबहरूलाई सहायता जस्ता

विभिन्न नाममा भएको खर्च अपारदर्शी तथा दलीय प्रयोजनमा समेत अप्रत्यक्ष रूपमा उपयोग भएको ठहर गर्दै त्यस्तो खर्चलाई तुरुन्त बन्द गर्न सिफारिस गरेको छ । तर यो चलन स्थानीय निकायमा मात्र होइन केन्द्रीय स्तरमा भन चर्को छ । तत्कालीन मन्त्रीहरूको प्रत्यक्ष वा अप्रत्यक्ष निर्देशनमा नियुक्त चार हजार भन्दा बढी प्राविधिक सहायकहरू वा दशौं हजार शिक्षकहरूले स्थानीय संस्थाहरूमा कस्तो दीर्घकालीन असर पारेको होला सबैलाई विदितै छ । यस्ता उदाहरणहरू जहाँ पनि र जतिपनि पाइन्छन् । हुँदा हुँदा सांसद कोषबाट संचालन हुने कार्यक्रमहरू तोक आदेशबाटै चल्ने हुँदा “तोक आदेश प्रकृया”ले वैधानिकता समेत पाईसकेको देखिन्छ । यसरी तोक आदेशबाटै साधनको विनियोजन, नियुक्ति, सरुवा आदि गर्ने हो भने विकेन्द्रीकरणको पद्धति किन चाहियो ? त्यसैले तोक आदेशबाट अवसरको वितरण वा साधनको विनियोजनलाई पूर्ण नियन्त्रण गर्नका लागि कुनै पनि प्रयोजनको निवेदन वा आयोजनाको माँगमा स्थानीय निकायका प्रमुखले तोक आदेश लगाउनुको सट्टा कार्यकारी प्रमुख समक्ष पेश गरी प्रचलित प्रकृयाबाट निर्णय गर्ने र त्यसरी निर्णय गर्न नसकिने भएमा नियमित बैठकमा पेश गरी निर्णय कार्यान्वयन गर्ने परम्परा बसाउनु पर्छ ।

(आ) सामाजिक परिचालन: विकेन्द्रित शासन पद्धतिको अत्यन्त सबल पक्ष भनेको सन्तुलित विकास भएकाले यसबाट पिछडिएको क्षेत्र, वर्ग र जात-जातिहरूमा विकासका श्रोत, साधन र अवसरहरू पुग्ने अपेक्षा गरिन्छ । तर बहुसंख्यक विपन्न वर्ग तथा जात-जातिहरू विकेन्द्रित संरचनाको पहुँच भन्दा धेरै तल, छरिएर र असहाय रूपमा रहेका हुन्छन् । तिनीहरूलाई कसरी स्वावलम्बी विकासमा उत्प्रेरित गर्ने, संगठित गर्ने र विकेन्द्रित संरचनाको पहुँचभित्र ल्याउने भन्ने सोच ऐनमा भएको देखिदैन । यस क्षेत्रमा जे जति काम भएका छन् ती पनि दातृ संस्था वा राष्ट्रिय/अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय गैर सरकारी संस्थाको पहलमा भएका पाइन्छन् । तर यस्ता कार्यहरू “अवधारणा” को रूपमा भन्दा आ-आफ्ना “आयोजना”का रूपमा संचालित छन् भने तिनीहरूका आ-आफ्नै रणनीतिहरू छन् । कतिपय यस्ता कार्यक्रमहरूले विकेन्द्रित संरचनालाई अरू कमजोर बनाएको देखिन्छ । उदाहरणका लागि UNDP बाट संचालित PDDP तथा LGP कार्यक्रमले समुदायस्तरमा “बचत, सीप र संगठन” निर्माण गरेर विकेन्द्रीकरणलाई अरू सबल बनाउने लक्ष राखे तापनि यसको संगठनात्मक प्रकृया अनुसार समुदाय स्तरमा सामुदायिक संस्था (CO) बनाइने, गा.वि.स. भरिका सबै सामुदायिक संस्था (CO)हरू मिलेर अध्यक्ष, म्यानेजर भेला (CMC) हुने, तिनीहरूले आयोजनाहरूको माँग स्थानीय विकास कोष (LTF) मा गर्ने र कार्यान्वयन पनि सोही संरचनाबाटै हुने प्रावधानले गा.वि.स. जस्ता नियमित संगठनहरूका तहगत निकायहरू कमजोर हुन सक्ने देखिन्छ । यसका विपरीत कतिपय अन्य संस्थाहरूले समुदाय स्तरमा जनपरिचालनबाट संगठित गरेका स्वावलम्बी संस्थाहरूलाई विकेन्द्रित संरचनाभित्र आवद्ध गर्ने कुनै प्रावधान देखिदैन ।

(इ) मूल्याङ्कन, अनुगमन तथा ज्ञानको अभिवृद्धि: विकेन्द्रित शासन व्यवस्थाको मर्म अनुरूप ऐन नियमहरू बनेका छन् छैनन् ? जे जति बनेका छन् ती लागू भएका छन् छैनन् ? ऐन नियमको पालना गर्ने गराउने क्षमता स्थानीय निकायहरूमा छ, छैन ? अब अरू के कस्ता सुधार गर्नु पर्ने हो ? जस्ता कुराहरूमा निरन्तर अनुगमन तथा मूल्याङ्कन गर्ने, बेला बेलामा गोष्ठी छलफल गराई नागरिक समाजलाई जागरूक गर्ने तथा सरकारलाई नियम कानून परिमार्जन गर्न मार्ग निर्देशन गर्ने संस्थाको अभाव छ । यस्तो कार्य गर्ने उपयुक्त संस्था स्थानीय विकास प्रशिक्षण केन्द्र (जुन पञ्चायत विकास प्रशिक्षण केन्द्रको परिवर्तित नाम मात्र हो) लाई आमूल सुधार गरेर वा सोही प्रकृतिको नयाँ संस्थाको स्थापना गरेर गर्न सकिन्छ तर त्यसो गर्न स्थानीय विकास मन्त्रालय तयार देखिदैन ।

त्यस्तै विकेन्द्रीकरण नीतिसँग प्रत्यक्ष सरोकार राख्ने स्थानीय निकायहरूले आ-आफ्ना महासंघहरू जस्तै गा.वि.स./नगरपालिका/जि.वि.स. महासंघ स्थापना गरेका छन् । विभिन्न कठिनाईहरूका बाबजुद तिनीहरूले स्थानीय स्वायत्त संस्थाहरूका आधिकारिक प्रतिनिधि संस्थाहरूको रूपमा पहिचान स्थापित गराईसकेका छन् । तर तिनीहरूमा सरकारलाई ऐन नियम बनाउन एवं कार्यान्वयन गर्न दवाव दिन सक्ने नैतिक क्षमता तथा जुभारूपनाको नितान्त अभाव देखिन्छ । किनभने तिनीहरूबाट स्थानीय निकायहरूको संरचना एवं कार्यपद्धतिलाई जनमुखी बनाउने, स्थानीय तहमा हुने गरेका भ्रष्टाचारहरूका विरुद्ध आवाज उठाउने, प्रजातान्त्रिक मूल्य मान्यताहरूको वकालत गर्ने जस्ता नैतिक आवाजहरू भन्दा सरकारले बढी भन्दा बढी श्रोत, साधन र अधिकार दिनु पर्ने माँगहरू नै सुनिने गरेको पाइन्छ । अझ केही समययता, नितान्त आफ्नै श्रोत र साधनबाट स्थापित यी महासंघहरू दाताहरूको प्रचुर सहयोगबाट “विकासे” संस्थाहरूमा रूपान्तरित भई दाताहरूकै आयोजनाहरूलाई वैधानिकता दिने कार्यमा संलग्न देखिन्छन् । फलतः गत असारमा देउवा सरकारले स्थानीय निकायहरूमा जनप्रतिनिधिहरूको म्याद थप नगरी कर्मचारीहरूलाई जिम्मा दिने जस्तो गैर प्रजातान्त्रिक कदम चाल्दा पनि दुई लाख भन्दा बढी जनप्रतिनिधिहरू समेटेका महासंघहरूले उक्त कदमको सशक्त प्रतिकार गर्न नसकी लाचार छायाँमा परिणत भएको देखियो ।

निष्कर्ष

मुलुकको सन्तुलित विकासका लागि विगतमा अपनाइएको विकेन्द्रित शासन पद्धति प्रभावकारी देखिएन । केन्द्रीय तहको नेतृत्वले यसको मर्मलाई आत्मसात गर्न सकेन, त्यसैले यसको कार्यान्वयन प्रति प्रतिबद्धता देखिएन भने स्थानीय निकायहरू विकेन्द्रित शासन पद्धतिका मूल्य र मान्यताबाट चलेनन् । फलतः विकेन्द्रित संरचनाबाट प्रवाहित साधन, श्रोत र अवसरहरू केही ठूला ठालूकै पहुँचमा सीमित रहन गई मुलुकको ठूलो हिस्सा र जात-जातिहरू विकासको मूल प्रवाहबाट बाहिर रहन गए । त्यसैले जन आक्रोश बढ्यो । माओवादी, खम्बुवान, मधेशी लगायतका मुक्ति मोर्चाहरूले दिएको एउटा सन्देश यो पनि हो । मुलुकमा भड्केको यो आक्रोश र विद्रोहलाई दीर्घकालीन रूपमा समाधान गर्न मुलुकको

समग्र क्षेत्रको सन्तुलित विकास हुनु जरुरी छ। यसका लागि एउटा बाटो विकेन्द्रित शासन व्यवस्थाको माध्यमबाट स्थान विशेषका श्रोत, साधन तथा संभावनाहरूको अधिकतम उपयोग गरी उत्पादन, रोजगारी तथा आम्दानीका अवसरहरू बढाएर जनताको जीवनस्तरमा सुधार गरेर हुनसक्छ। यस कार्यमा केन्द्र र स्थानीय सरकारको के कस्तो सर-सहयोग चाहिन्छ भन्ने प्रश्नको उत्तरमा नै विकेन्द्रित शासन व्यवस्थाको मर्म अडेको हुन्छ। यस परिप्रेक्षमा नेपालमा यो शासन व्यवस्थाको विकास गर्नका लागि देहायका कुराहरू महत्त्वपूर्ण हुन सक्छन्:

- विकेन्द्रित शासन व्यवस्था दाताहरूको सहयोगमा संचलित हुने “आयोजना” नभएर राज्य संचालनको एउटा पद्धति भएकाले राजनैतिक तहमा यसको विवेचना, विश्लेषण तथा आत्मसात भई दीर्घकालीन रणनीतिको खाकामा राजनैतिक सहमति हुन जरुरी छ।
- स्थानीय निकायहरूलाई केन्द्रले दाताहरूबाट माँगेर ल्याएको “राहत” कार्यक्रम संचालन गर्ने निकायको रूपमा भन्दा स्थानीय श्रोत, साधन तथा संभावनाहरूको अधिकतम उपयोग गरी जनताको जीवनस्तर उठाउन सक्ने हैसियत भएको प्रतिनिधिमूलक संस्थाको रूपमा विकसित गर्नु पर्छ।
- विकेन्द्रित संरचनालाई “बलियो” बनाउने हो भने तहगत/क्षेत्रगत भूमिकालाई स्पष्ट पार्ने तथा प्रजातान्त्रिक, पारदर्शी र जवाफदेहीमूलक संस्थागत संरचनाको विकास गर्नु पर्छ।
- विकेन्द्रित शासन व्यवस्था “एकैचोटी” लागू गर्ने योजना नभएर “गर्दै, सिक्दै जाने” पद्धति भएकाले केन्द्रीय स्तरमा अनुगमन, अनुसन्धान, तालिम, प्रकाशन तथा प्रसार गर्ने प्रभावकारी, स्वतन्त्र एवं दक्ष प्रतिष्ठान हुनु आवश्यक छ। सरकारमा पनि विगतको अनुभवबाट नीतिगत परिमार्जन गर्ने खुला सोच हुनु आवश्यक छ।

पुछे नोट

१. प्रतिनिधि सभा, सार्वजनिक लेखा समितिद्वारा मिति २०५९ माघ ५ (19 January, 2003) मा आयोजित नेपालको सन्तुलित विकासको सन्दर्भमा विकेन्द्रित शासन व्यवस्था विषयको गोष्ठीमा प्रस्तुत कार्यपत्र।

सन्दर्भ ग्रन्थ

१. नेपाल अधिराज्यको संविधान २०४७।
२. विकेन्द्रीकरण तथा स्थानीय स्वायत्त शासन सम्बन्धी प्रतिवेदन २०५३, उच्चस्तरीय विकेन्द्रीकरण समन्वय समिति।
३. स्थानीय स्वायत्त शासन ऐन २०५५।

४. स्थानीय निकाय वित्तीय आयोगको प्रतिवेदन २०५७ ।
५. विकेन्द्रीकरणको जुक्ति: जिल्ला सुदृढीकरण पच्चीस जिल्लाको नयाँ नेपाल
डा. हर्क गुरुङ, हिमाल १६-२९ फागुन २०५८ ।
६. देशान्तर साप्ताहिक, वर्ष २०, अंक ३६, २१ पुष २०५९ ।

RESEARCH NOTE

पोखरा उपत्यकामा विवाह-विच्छेद निम्त्याउने केही कारक तत्त्वहरू

रामचन्द्र बराल

पृष्ठभूमि

यो लेख त्रिभुवन विश्वविद्यालय अन्तर्गत समाजशास्त्र विषयको स्नातकोत्तर तहका शोधपत्र लेखनका क्रममा २०५६ सालमा गरिएको अनुसन्धानमा आधारित छ । कास्की जिल्ला अदालतको अभिलेखमा भेटिएका २०४६-०५५ सम्मका कानुनी पारपाचुकीहरूमध्ये पोखरा उपत्यका र वरपरका ग्रामीण वस्तीमा वसोवास गर्ने तागाधारी जाति अर्थात् ब्राह्मण-क्षेत्री जातिलाई केन्द्रित गरेर गहन अध्ययन गरिएको यस अनुसन्धानको निचोड पारिवारिक द्वन्द्व व्यवस्थापन र खोजका क्षेत्रमा चासो राख्ने प्राज्ञ तथा विद्यार्थीहरूलाई उपयोगी हुने छ । अनुसन्धानको निष्कर्षमा प्रस्तावित सैद्धान्तिक खाकालाई 'सिन्थेसिस' गर्नका निमित्त प्रशस्त 'एन्ट्री थेसीस' गराउनु यस लेखको उद्देश्य रहेको छ ।

अनुसन्धानका दौरान विवाह विच्छेदका कारक तत्त्वहरू र त्यसले पार्ने बहुअसरहरूको खोजी र उपचारको प्रस्तावना गरिएको भए पनि यस लेखमा विवाह विच्छेदका कारक तत्त्व र सैद्धान्तिक दृष्टिकोणलाई मात्र प्रस्तुत गर्न खोजिएको छ ।

दाम्पत्य जीवनमा आएको विघटनलाई 'फोकस' गरिएको यस अध्ययनमा विवाह-विच्छेदसँग सम्बन्धित सबैखाले घटना विवाहको सृजना, दाम्पत्य योजना, यौन जीवन र पारिवारिक व्यवस्थाको प्रभावकारितालाई समेत सूक्ष्म रूपमा केलाइनुका साथै सैद्धान्तिक समीकरण समेत प्रस्ताव गरेर विवाह-विच्छेदका कारण बाहिरी प्रभावबाट भन्दा पनि कौटुम्बिकसम्बन्धको जालो भित्रैबाट सृजना हुने कुरा प्रष्ट देखाइएको छ । यस अध्ययनको प्रभावकारितामा भौगोलिक सीमाङ्कन भन्दा पनि सामाजिक व्यवस्था र वैवाहिक व्यवहारले महत्त्व राख्दछ । शोधमा उठाइए भैं कौटुम्बिकताले नै विघटनमुखी क्रियाकलाप सृजना र संचालन गर्न उद्यत भएमा नेपाल भरिका समाजमा यहाँ प्रस्तावित सिद्धान्तले प्रभाव राख्न सक्छ ।

तालिका नं. १ कास्की जिल्लाको पारपाचुकेको जातिगत आँकडा (२०४६-२०५५)

साल	तागाधारी	मंगोल	नेवार	दलित	अन्य	कूल
२०४६	२१	१९	४	४	५	४५
२०४७	५	८	२	१	१	१७
२०४८	१०	१६	१	३	०	३०
२०४९	३१	२७	०	७	२	६७
२०५०	१२	३१	३	७	१	५४
२०५१	२१	२२	१	४	२	५०
२०५२	२१	२५	५	५	२	५८
२०५३	१९	३४	५	८	१	६७
२०५४	२१	५०	६	११	३	९१
२०५५	४३	५५	७	७	१	११३
कूल	१९६	२८७	३४	५७	१८	५९२
प्रतिशत	(३३%)	(४८.५%)	(५.७४)	(९.६२)	(३.०४%)	(१००%)

स्रोत: कास्की जिल्ला अदालत अभिलेख, २०४६-२०५५

वैदिककालदेखि पौराणिक कालसम्म प्रचलित हिन्दू विवाहलाई स्मृतिकारहरूले दुइ भागमा बाँडेका छन्, धर्म विवाह (ब्राह्म, दैव, प्रजापत्य र आर्ष) तथा अधार्मिक (गन्धर्व, राक्षस, आसुर, पैचास) विवाह। धार्मिक विवाह वैदिक विधानले गरिने संस्कार भएकाले यो दाम्पत्य अटूट राख्न उनीहरूले विवाहको क्रममा 'सप्तपदी' प्रकृत्यामा प्रतिज्ञा गर्दछन्। त्यसैले त मनुस्मृतिमा विवाहको प्रमुख कार्यको रूपमा सप्तपदीलाई मानिन्छ। "कन्या एकपटक मात्र दान गरिन्छ, एउटालाई बचन दिएर अर्कालाई नदिनु, दण्ड लाग्नेछ। तर यदि सप्तपदीको कार्य बाँकी भएको र बागदानबाट दिएको कन्याका सवालमा अगिल्लोको तुलनामा उत्तम वर आएमा र अधिल्लो पातकी भएमा कन्यादान रोकी र उत्तम वरलाई दिनु। किनकि मनु वचन अनुसार सप्तपदी गरेर मात्र विवाह कार्य समाप्त हुनेछ भन्ने धारणा याज्ञवल्क्य स्मृतिले समेटेको छ (याज्ञवल्क्य १९८० : २८)।

हिन्दू विवाह सामाजिक सम्झौताको विन्दुभन्दा धेरै टाढा छ, यहाँ एउटा महिला र पुरुषको एकताभन्दा पनि दुई परिवार बीचको एकतालाई जोड दिइन्छ। यसर्थ यो धार्मिक संस्था र प्रतीक पनि हो। विवाहद्वारा ती व्यक्तिहरू आमरण एक आपसमा बाँधिएका हुन्छन्, ती परिवार तथा कुटुम्बहरूको कार्यात्मक सम्बन्ध त निक्कै पछिल्लो पिँढीसम्म पनि कृत्याशील रहन्छ। "मावली खाने सात पुस्ता" भन्ने उखानले नै यसको कौटुम्बिकीय प्रभाव देखाउँछ। हिन्दू मान्यतामा गौरीशंकरको एकरूपता मानिए भैं दम्पती पनि सहअंगी भएमा मात्र पूर्ण मानिन्छ भन्ने धार्मिक, नैतिक र आध्यात्मिक मत भएकोले विवाह विच्छेदलाई

स्वीकार्य नमानिएको हो (Boodhoo 1994: 50-94) । हिन्दू धर्मशास्त्रमा पति र पत्नि वैदिक विधिपूर्वक एउटै तन, एउटै मन र एउटै धर्मका लागि प्रतिज्ञावद्ध दाम्पत्यमा बाँधिने मान्यताले गर्दा पारपाचुकेको प्रावधान पाइँदैन । वैदिक समाज सरल थियो र त्यतिबेलाको सरल समाजमा पारिवारिक जटिलता कम हुने भएकोले होला वैदिक साहित्यमा विवाह विच्छेद सम्बन्धी कुनै प्रकारको चर्चा पाइँदैन । पति पत्नीमा आमरण निष्ठापूर्वक पतित्व र पत्नीत्व को परम धर्ममा अनुबन्धित हुनु नै विवाह संस्कार भएकोले यो सम्बन्ध विखण्डन हुन नसक्ने (अदूट साइनो) मानिन्छ (मनु स्मृति ९/१००) । धर्मपूर्वक एकता भएका अर्धाङ्गी/अर्धाङ्गिनीहरू विवाह विच्छेद गरेर विखण्डित तथा अपाङ्ग प्रायः हुने कुरालाई धर्मशास्त्रले सम्मति नदिएको देखिन्छ ।

धर्मशास्त्रका पालामा “विवाह विच्छेद” को शाब्दिक प्रयोग नपाइए पनि एउटा विवाहलाई निस्क्रिय बनाई अर्को विवाह गर्ने प्रावधान भने पर्याप्त मात्रामा पाइन्छ । मनुले वाग्दान गरीसकिएकी कन्यालाई पनि यदि ‘सप्तपदी’ पुरा भएको छैन भने पहिलोबाट कन्या हरण गर्न सकिने (याज्ञवल्क्य १९८० : २८) कुराको उल्लेख हामीले अधिल्ला अनुच्छेदमा पायौं । यसबाट के स्पष्ट हुन्छ भने ‘सप्तपदी’ नगरिएका विवाहहरू विच्छेद हुन सक्ने शास्त्रीय मत छ । मनुस्मृतिको युगताका एक उदारवादी ऋषि पराशरले पाँचवटा दोष (पंच खत) भएको अवस्थामा विवाह विच्छेद हुन सक्ने कुरा अगाडि सारेका छन् (परासर १९६८ : ३४) ।^१ पराशर स्मृतिमा उल्लेख भए अनुसार लोग्ने नष्ट भएमा (हराएमा), मरेमा, जोगी/सन्यासी भएमा, नपुंसक (क्लीव) भएमा र पतित्वबाट पतन भएमा त्यस्ती नारीलाई अर्को विवाह गर्न दिनु पर्दछ । यस्तैगरी कौटिल्यले आफ्नो अर्थशास्त्रमा विवाह-विच्छेद बारेमा पक्षपाती विचार राखेका छन् । एकातिर उनी कुनै पनि नीच, प्रवासी, पैरदेशी, राजद्रोही, हत्यारा, जाति-धर्मच्युत तथा नपुंसक लोग्नेसँग स्त्रीले विवाह-विच्छेद गर्न सक्ने छिन् (अर्थशास्त्र ३:२: ५९; मुकर्जी १९७९) भनेका छन् भने अर्कोतिर धर्म विवाह गरिएका दम्पतीमा कुनै पनि अवस्थामा विवाह-विच्छेद हुन सक्दैन भन्दछन् । अर्थात् अभिभावकद्वारा कुनै पनि प्रकारको कन्यादान र सप्तपदीको प्रकृत्यामा विवाहित स्त्री-पुरुषलाई पारपाचुकेको सम्भावना मनुले भै कौटिल्यले पनि दिँदैनन् । तर पुनः विवाहको सवालमा उनी लोग्ने मान्छेलाई पुत्रका लागि पुनः विवाह गर्न र स्त्रीका लागि पनि लोग्ने परदेश गएको दश मासिक धर्मपछि धर्माधिकारीको आज्ञाले पति तर्फको सपिण्डमा विवाह गर्न सकिने बताउँछन् (मुकर्जी १९७९: ३६४) ।

यहाँ लोग्नेले पुनः विवाह गर्दा पूर्व विवाह विखण्डनको आवश्यकता देखाइँदैन तर नारीले पुनः विवाह गर्दा पूर्व विवाहको अस्तित्व समाप्त हुन्छ । कौटिल्यले स्त्रीलाई जुन अवस्थामा पुनः विवाहको अनुमति दिए, त्यसबाट पूर्व विवाहको विखण्डन हुन सक्ने सम्भावनालाई स्वीकार गरिएको बुझ्न सकिन्छ । “पारिवारिक स्थिरता निरन्तरता दिनका भनि कौटिल्यले प्रथम चार प्रकारका (बाम्ह-दैव-आर्ष-प्रजापत्य) धर्म विवाहलाई पारपाचुकेको अनुमति दिन नहुने बताए पनि केटा वा केटी दुवै पक्षमा गम्भीर दोषहरू विवाह पछि थाहा पाइएमा त्यस्ता विवाह अमान्य मात्र नभई गम्भीर दोषहरू लुकाउने पक्षलाई आर्थिक जरिवाना समेत

हुने कुरा उल्लेख गरेका छन् (मुकर्जी १९७९:३६४) । यतिवेला छुट्टिएको श्रीमती माथिको सांस्कृतिक र कानूनी साइनो भइ नै रहन्थ्यो (Thapaliya 1995:19) । यसरी हेर्दा परित्यक्तालाई पुनः विवाह गर्ने सवर्ण पुरुषको अभाव भएकोले पूर्व पतिबाट अदृष्ट रूपमा कर्तव्यको साइनो निरन्तर गराई राख्न, विवाह संस्कारको महत्वलाई बचाई राख्न हिन्दू शास्त्रहरूमा सम्बन्ध विच्छेदको प्रावधान दुर्लभ भएको देखिन्छ ।

भारतीय समाजमा पनि मनुस्मृतिको प्रभावले विवाह विच्छेदको प्रचलन थिएन । तर तल्लो भनिएका जातहरूमा भने यो प्रचलनमा थियो । जाति व्यवस्थामा उपल्ला भनिएका तागाधारीहरूलाई धर्मसंस्कारको संरक्षण र प्रयोगकर्ता वर्ग मानिएकोले उनीहरूलाई पारपाचुकेको अनुमति थिएन । यूरोपमा रोमन कानूनअन्तर्गत विवाहलाई सम्भौता मानिन थालियो । मुस्लिम कानूनले पनि विवाहलाई सम्भौताको रूपमा लियो । अंग्रेजले आफ्नो उपनिवेशमा आफ्नो देशको कानून प्रचार गर्‍यो । भारतमा Native converts marriage Dissolution Act 1866 पारित भएपछि पति वा पत्नीले धर्म परिवर्तन गरे पनि विवाह विच्छेद हुन सक्ने गरियो । त्यसपछि बनेका भारतीय कानूनहरूमा विवाह विच्छेदको व्यवस्था भयो । मानिसको स्वतन्त्रता र नागरिक हकको नाराको साथसाथै विवाह विच्छेद हुनसक्ने कानूनी व्यवस्था पनि विकसित हुँदै गयो (श्रेष्ठ २०४९:२५) । भारतीय हिन्दू विवाह ऐन, १९५५ ले स्पष्ट रूपमा निश्चित कारणहरू खुलाएर विवाह विच्छेदको व्यवस्था गर्‍यो । समयको क्रममा नेपाली जनजातिहरूमा पारपाचुकेको प्रथा विकसित रूपमा देखा पर्न थाले । फलस्वरूप तत्कालीन शक्तिशाली राणा प्रधान मन्त्री जंग बहादुर राणाले मुलुकी ऐन १९१० मा लोग्ने स्वास्नी बीच विवाद भएमा “सिन्को भाँची छुट्टिन” सकिने प्रावधान ल्याए । यसको अर्थ पार्थक्य थियो, कानूनतः विवाह-विच्छेद थिएन । यसमा दम्पतीमा यौन सम्बन्ध निषेध गर्न मात्र खोजिएको थियो, श्रीमती पोइल नगएसम्म श्रीमानले जीविकाको व्यवस्था मिलाई दिनु पर्दथ्यो (Thapaliya, 1995: 19) ।

वि.सं. १९९२ मा मुलुकी ऐनलाई पाँच भागमा विभाजन गरी “लोग्ने स्वास्नीको महल” खडा गरियो । यसमा विवाह विच्छेदका केही प्रावधान राखियो । विवाह विच्छेदका लागि स्वास्नीको उपयुक्त कमजोरी देखाउनु पर्ने, अन्यथा तलाक नहुने नियम राखियो । “दुवै दम्पतीका सहमति भएमा कानूनी रीत पुन्याएर गाउँका भद्र-भलादमीको साक्षी प्रमाण सहित “दोहोरो लिखत” गरी पारपाचुके गर्न सक्दथे । यो कार्य गाउँका मुखिया (सरकारका स्थानीय प्रतिनिधि; जसले गाउँको De-Facto शक्ति परिचालन गर्दथे) हरूकोमा “घरसारको लिखत” गरी पारपाचुके गर्न सक्दथे । तर यो सुविधा तागाधारी बाहेकलाई मात्र उपलब्ध थियो । तत्कालिन नेपालमा सवैलाई एउटै कानूनी दायरा उपलब्ध थिएन । प्रजातन्त्रको वहाली (२००७) पछि नेपाल विश्वका लागि खुल्ला भयो र विश्वका परिवर्तनले प्रभाव पार्ने अवस्था देखा पर्‍यो ।

भारतीय कानूनमा तागाधारीलाई पनि विवाह विच्छेदको प्रावधान राखिएको (सन् १९५५) अवस्थामा त्यसको प्रभाव नेपाली समाजमा पनि देखा पर्न थाल्यो । मुलुकी ऐनको संशोधन २०२० ले नेपालका सवै जात-जाति भाषा-भाषीहरूलाई एउटै कानूनी दायरामा समेट्यो ।

फलस्वरूप “घरसारको लिखत” गर्ने पाचुके चलनलाई खारेज गरी पारपाचुकेको फैसला गर्ने काम अदालतबाट हुने व्यवस्था गर्‍यो । जनजातिहरूले पाउँदै आएको विवाह-विच्छेदको हकलाई तागाधारीहरूले पनि कानूनी रूपमा उपभोग गर्न पाए । कानूनी रूपमा तागाधारीहरूले विवाह-विच्छेद गर्ने हक नपाएसम्म समाजमा तागाधारी जातिमा पारपाचुकेका घटनाहरू घटेनन् भन्न त्यति सकिँदैन । किनभने पारिवारिक असन्तुष्टिका कारण महिलाहरूले आत्महत्या गर्न पुगेका, माइतीघरको शरणमा बस्न पुगेका, पोइला गएका र मुडिएर जोगी बनेका घटनाहरू तागाधारी समाजमा छिटफुट रूपमा भएका कुराहरू अध्ययन क्षेत्रका वृद्ध वृद्धाहरूसँगको छलफलमा पाइएको छ । कानूनी रूपमा विवाह-विच्छेदको अवस्था नपाइए पनि सामाजिक रूपमा परिवार र दाम्पत्य विखण्डनका नमूनाहरू त्यसपूर्व पनि तागाधारी समाजमा पाइन्थे भन्ने कुरा स्थलगत अध्ययनको क्रममा पाइएका सूचनाहरूले पुष्टी गरेको छ ।

आधुनिक राज्य व्यवस्था तिर फड्कोमार्ने क्रममा हाम्रो मुलुकले पनि परिवर्तित सामाजिक जटिलतालाई सामना गर्न कानूनी सर्वोपरी राज्यको अवधारणालाई अवलम्बन गर्न थाल्यो । विवाह पछि व्यक्तिको धनमा श्रीमतीको पनि समान हैसियत रहने कानूनी प्रावधानले महत्वपूर्ण आर्थिक सवालको निर्णय प्रकृत्यामा श्रीमतिको पनि निर्णायक हैसियत स्थापित भएकोले प्रशासनिक निकायमा विवाह दर्ता गर्नुपर्ने प्रणाली बस्यो । परिवारका कानूनी कृत्याकलापमा सक्रिय रहन सक्ने कानूनी हैसियत प्राप्त गर्न जवसम्म कानूनतः विवाह दर्ता हुँदैन तबसम्म श्रीमतीको हक स्थापित गर्न कानूनी प्रकृत्या पुग्दैन, यसर्थ नै विवाह दर्ताको प्रकृत्या सामाजिक रूपमा बढ्न थाल्यो । त्यसैक्रममा पूर्वकालीन शैलीमा स्वास्नी अर्को व्यक्तिसँग पोइल गइन् भन्ने कानूनी प्रकृत्यामा उनको पूर्वपतिको परिवारमा रहेको कानूनी हैसियत बन्दगर्न फेरी कानूनतः सम्बन्ध तोडिएको पनि अभिलेख राख्नु पर्ने भयो, अन्यथा कानूनतः उनी पूर्व पतिकी स्वास्नी भैरहने र निजको सम्पत्तिमा दावी गर्नसक्ने कानूनी हैसियत हुने भएकाले विवाह दर्ता गर्न हतार नगरे पनि पारपाचुके दर्ता गर्न समाजमा हतार देखिन थाल्यो । वि.सं. २०२० को मुलुकी ऐन क्रियाशील भएपछि तागाधारीहरूले पनि विकृत विवाहबाट “स्वतन्त्र” हुने मौका पाएकाले कानूनी पारपाचुके गर्नेहरूको सूचीमा प्रवेश लिनथाले । त्यसभन्दा पहिले कुनैपनि तागाधारी जातिको व्यक्तिलाई पारपाचुके गर्ने कानूनी हक थिएन । २०२० सालपछि कानूनले सम्पत्तिको ढोका खोलेपछि सामाजिक रूपमा पारपाचुके गर्न सकिने अवस्था बन्द भयो र सबैले अड्डामा नै जानुपर्ने बाध्यता बन्यो (बराल, २०५७ : ४२) ।

दम्पतिबीच अन्तरक्रियात्मक सम्बन्धको विवेचना

अध्ययनका क्रममा संकलित तथ्याङ्कहरूले दिएका सूचनाहरू र अनुभवले दिएका सूचनाहरू विश्लेषण गर्ने दुईवटा प्रक्रिया समावेश गरिएका छन् । तथ्याङ्कहरू विशेषतः वैवाहिकता अध्ययनकै सेरोफेरोमा परेका हुनाले समाजमा क्रियाशील विवाहका प्रकार, जोडी चयनका प्रक्रिया, दाम्पत्य सृजना र सञ्चालनका प्रक्रिया, दम्पतीका यौन जीवनको सन्तुलन तथा

पारपाचुके हुन पुगनुका कारण र सोबाट पर्न गएका असरहरूका पक्षमा विभिन्न शीर्षक र उपशीर्षकहरू मार्फत प्रष्ट्याउने प्रयास गरिएको छ । यहाँ संलग्न सूचनाहरूका आधार भनेका सम्बन्धित पक्षहरूसँग शोधकर्ताको व्यवस्थित प्रत्यक्ष अन्तरक्रिया र अवलोकनमा संकलित तथ्यहरू हुन र 'उनीहरूकै अनुभवमा उनीहरूको घटना केलाउने' दृष्टिकोण अवलम्बन गरिएको छ ।

जातिगत आधारमा पारपाचुकेको स्थिति : अध्ययन केन्द्रित तागाधारीहरूमा पारपाचुकेको चलन तत्संवन्धी कानूनी छुट प्राप्त भएदेखि (वि.सं. २०२०) के कतिको अवस्थामा रहेको थियो भन्ने बारेमा पनि खोजी गर्ने जमर्को भएको थियो । तर अदालतमा मिसिलको व्यवस्था अव्यवस्थित भएकाले र तथ्याङ्क प्राप्त गर्न नसकिएकाले २०३० साल देखिका तथ्याङ्कहरू मात्र प्रारम्भिक अवस्थामा संकलन गरिएको छ । संकलित तथ्याङ्कको आँकडा तालिका ३ मा दिइएको छ ।

तालिका नं. ३ मा उल्लेखित आँकडामा वि.सं. २०३० सालदेखि २०४५ सालसम्म क्षेत्रीहरूको पारपाचुके घटना अगाडि देखिएको छ भने २०४६ साल देखि ब्राह्मण जातिको पारपाचुकेको घटनाले अगुवाई गर्न थालेको छ । यसमा ०४६ साल देखि क्षेत्री जातीहरूको विवाह-विच्छेदका घटना कम हुन थालेका भने होइनन्, उनीहरूलाई उछिनेर ब्राह्मण जातिका विवाह-विच्छेदका घटनाहरू तिब्र गतिमा अगाडि आउन थालेका देखिन्छन् ।

तालिका नं. ३ कास्की जिल्लाका तागाधारी पारपाचुकीको जातिगत वितरण (२०३०-५५)

वर्ष	ब्राह्मण	क्षेत्री	कुल
२०३०-३५	१७ (४४.७%)	२१ (५५.३%)	३८ (१००%)
०३६-४०	१६ (४८.७%)	१७ (५१.५%)	३३ (१००%)
०४१-४५	२७ (४६%)	३२ (५४%)	५९ (१००%)
०४६-५०#	३९ (५५%)	३२ (४५%)	७१ (१००%)
०५१-५५#	७४ (५९%)	५१ (४१%)	१२५ (१००%)
कुल	१७३ (५३%)	१५३ (४७%)	३२६ (१००%)

नोट: यस अध्ययनले समेटेको अवधि ।

स्रोत: कास्की जिल्ला अदालत अभिलेख, २०३०-५५

कट्टरपन्थी संस्कारभीरू मानिएका तागाधारी मध्येमा पनि ब्राह्मणहरूमा समेत यसरी विवाह विच्छेदका घटना वर्षेनी बढ्दै जानुले आजको समाजमा कि त परम्परागत साँस्कृतिक नियन्त्रणको घेरा कमजोर भएको देखाउँछ, कि संस्कारको आडम्बरमा पवित्र वैवाहिकताका नाममा गरिएका कृत्यहरू अपवित्र भएकाले दम्पतीहरू स्वयंले भत्काउँदैछन् कि भन्ने प्रश्न उठाएको छ । स्थलगत अध्ययनमा पाइएको अभिमत अनुसारको आँकडा (तालिका नं. ४) अनुसार तागाधारीहरू

मध्ये सबैभन्दा उपल्लो दर्जामा रहेका उपाध्याय जातिमा पनि पारपाचुके हुने गरेको तथ्य देखिएको छ ।

तालिका नं. ४ नमूना सर्वेक्षणका जोडीको जातीय वितरण

उपाध्याय दम्पति	जैशी दम्पति	क्षेत्री दम्पति	कुल जोडी
५	१०	९	२४
२०.८%	४१.७%	३७.५%	१००%

श्रोत: स्थलगत सर्वेक्षण, २०५६ ।

यस आँकडाले उपाध्याय, जैशी र क्षेत्री दम्पतीमा पारपाचुकेको मात्रा घटी बढी देखाए पनि सबै जातीय तहमा पारपाचुकेका घटनाहरू निरपेक्ष रूपमा हुने गरेको तथ्य २०% भन्दा माथिको तथ्याङ्कले प्रष्ट पार्दछ । यसर्थ विवाह-विच्छेद कुनै धर्म-जातिका आधारमा हुने वा नहुने भन्ने व्याख्याहरू गलत देखिन्छन् । विधिपूर्वक विवाह संस्कार गर्ने कहलिएका ब्राह्मणहरूमा पनि दाम्पत्य संयोग त्रुटिपूर्ण सावित भएका यी घटनाले उनीहरूले अभ्यास गरेका जोडी चयन तथा दाम्पत्य सञ्चालनको पद्धति वा व्यवस्थामा अवश्य पनि कुनै ठाउँमा कुनै त्रुटी भइरहेको तथ्य स्पष्ट पाउँछ । त्यस्तैगरी क्षेत्रीका तुलनामा ब्राह्मणहरूमा बढी पारिवारिक विखण्डन आएको तथ्यले ब्राह्मण परिवारमा दाम्पत्य जीवन बढी अनुदार भएकाले असन्तुलित हुने गरेको हो कि भन्ने प्रश्न उठाएको छ ।

जोडी चयनका प्रक्रिया र पारपाचुकीहरूको वितरण : जोडी चयनको प्रक्रिया भन्नाले विवाहपूर्व केटा र केटीका बीचमा वैवाहिक सम्बन्ध स्थापना गर्ने सवालमा कुन पक्षले सक्रिय भूमिका निर्वाह गरेको थियो भन्ने तथ्यका आधारमा निर्धारण गरिएको छ । वयस्कहरूको दाम्पत्य स्थापनाको निर्णय कसले गर्‍यो र कसरी गराइयो भन्ने तथ्यले उनीहरूको विवाह सम्बन्धको सृजना कसरी हुन पुग्यो भन्ने तथ्य यहाँ केलाउन खोजिएको छ । त्यस्तै कसरी सृजना भएका विवाह (जोडी चयन) मा पारपाचुकेको स्थिति कस्तो रहन पुगेको छ भन्ने तथ्य पनि पत्ता लगाउन खोजिएको छ ।

पोखरा उपत्यकामा तागाधारी समुदायमा पाँच प्रकारले जोडी चयन गर्ने अभ्यास हुने गरेको तथ्य तालिका नं. ५ ले देखाएको छ । यहाँ पेशेवर लमीको पहलमा विवाह गर्ने प्रचलन अबै बसिसकेको देखिँदैन । काठमाडौँमा पेशेवर रूपमा विवाहका जोडी खोज्ने काममा पहल गर्न बसेका 'म्यारीज व्युरो' ले पोखरामा प्रभाव नपारेको भए पनि सामाजिक लमीले बढी भूमिका निर्वाह गरेको आँकडा (३७.५%) विवाहमा देखिएको संलग्नताले देखाउँछ । यसो त तथ्याङ्कले दिएको सूचना अनुसार पारपाचुके भएका विवाहहरूमा सबैभन्दा बढी ३७.५% सामाजिक लमीको पहलमा गरिएको विवाह र उत्तिकै तहमा ३७.५% निजी पहलमा भएका प्रेम विवाह समान रूपमा अगाडि छन् । दोश्रो दर्जामा १२.५% इष्ट मित्रको पहलमा भएको विवाह, तेश्रो दर्जामा ८.३% समूहगत/दलगत पहलमा गरिएको विवाह र चौथौँ दर्जामा ४.२% अभिभावकको पहलमा भएको विवाहमा पनि विखण्डन देखिएको छ ।

तालिका नं. ५ जोडी चयनमा प्रमुख भूमिका खेल्नेहरू

जोडी चयनका प्रक्रिया	प्रभावित जोडी	प्रतिशत	मागी विवाह	प्रेम विवाह
(क) अभिभावकको पहलमा जोडी चयन	१	४.२%	१	-
(ख) इष्टमित्रको पहलमा जोडी चयन	३	१२.५%	३	-
(ग) सामाजिक लमीको पहलमा जोडी चयन	९	३७.५%	९	-
#(घ) पेशेवर लमीको पहलमा जोडी चयन	०	०%	-	-
(ङ) निजी पहलमा जोडी चयन	९	३७.५%	-	९
(च) समूहगत/दलगत पहलमा जोडी चयन	२	८.३%	-	२
कुल	२४	१००%	५४.२	४५.८

#नोट: यस क्षेत्रमा पेशेवर लमीको पहलमा जोडी चयन भएका सरोकार घटना पाइएनन् ।

स्रोत: स्थलगत सर्वेक्षण, २०५६ ।

यस्तै क्रममा विवाहका प्रकारहरूको आधारमा हेर्ने हो भने पारपाचुके भएका मध्ये बढीजसो ५४.२% मागी विवाहमा परेका छन् भने स्वेच्छिक सम्मत्तिका आधारमा भएका भनिने प्रेम विवाहले पनि ४५.८% पारपाचुकेको आकारमा स्थान लिएको छ ।

उल्लेखित आँकडाले दिएको सूचना अनुसार सामाजिक लमीको पहलमा गरिएका विवाह र निजी पहलमा भएका विवाहमा अत्याधिक संख्यामा पारपाचुके गर्नेहरू देखिएका छन् । अभिभावकको पहलबाट गरेर गरिएका विवाह पनि यसबाट अछुतो रहन सकेका छैनन् । अझ, माँगी विवाह र प्रेम विवाह दुवैमा करिब करिब उस्तै दाँजोमा विखण्डन रोपिएको देखिएको छ । अन्तरवार्ता क्रममा प्रेमविवाहका अधिकांश जोडीहरूले 'माँगी विवाह ठीक हो कि' भन्दै थिए भने मागी विवाहका जोडीले "प्रेम विवाह पो ठीक हुन्थ्यो होला" भन्ने धारणा व्यक्त गरेका छन् । यसले के देखाउँछ भने चाहे अभिभावकले वा इष्टमित्रले वा लमीले पहल गरेको माँगी विवाह होस चाहे निजी पहलमा वा दलगत पहलमा गरिएको प्रेम विवाह होस्, सबै खाले शैलीका विवाह विखण्डन हुन पुगेका छन् । माँगी विवाह र प्रेम विवाह आफैमा कुनै पारपाचुकेबाट सुरक्षित वा असुरक्षित भनेर व्याख्या गर्न नहुने देखिएको छ । कारण यी दुवै खाले विवाहमा खराबी पाइएको छ र दुवैशैली दोषमुक्त हुन सकेका छैनन् ।

जोडी छनौटको क्रममा स्वस्थ पहिचानको स्थिति : विवाह जीवन्त सामाजिक व्यवहार भएकोले यसमा प्रवेश गर्ने प्रक्रियामा जोडीका प्रत्याशीहरू एक आपसमा स्वस्थ पहिचान भएर गरिएको निर्णय दिगो र पारदर्शी रहन सक्छ । अस्वस्थ तथा छलकपटमा, बनाइएको आडम्बरसँगको पहिचानका आधारमा गरिएको निर्णय विवाहपछि वास्तविकता पत्ता लागेको अवस्थामा एक-अर्कामा अविश्वास, शंका र धोकाको दृष्टिकोण रहने प्रबल सम्भावना हुन्छ । हाम्रो ग्रामीण जनजीवनमा विवाह गराउने क्रममा स्वस्थ पहिचानको अभाव रहेको गुनासो

प्रशस्त सुनिन्छन् र “ढाँटी ढुटी विहे...” भन्ने आख्यानको प्रचलनले त्यस्तै गुमराहमा पारी विवाह गराइने शैलीको छनक दिन्छ। प्रारम्भिक पहिचानका क्रममा पारदर्शी रूपमा प्रस्तावित प्रत्याशीहरूमा एक अर्काका बारेमा जान्न-बुझ्न पर्ने समग्र दाम्पत्य जीवनसँग सरोकार पक्षका बारेमा स्वयम् प्रत्याशी बीचमै छलफल भएर एकले अर्काको मनोविश्लेषण गरेर, भविष्यको योजना र आपसी अपेक्षित तालमेलका बारेमा पारदर्शी अन्तरक्रिया गरी एकले अर्कोलाई स्पष्टसँग चिन्ने, चिनाउन पाउनु पर्ने मान्यतालाई स्वस्थ पहिचानको स्थिति भित्र समेटिएको छ। विवाहमा स्वस्थ पहिचानको अभावमा अगाडि बढाइएका प्रक्रियाहरू दुवै पक्षले काल्पनिक सोचाईको भरमा र मध्यस्त पक्ष (लमी) को अवास्तविक भनाइको लहै-लहैमा संयोग गराइएमा दम्पतीका बीचमा मनोवैज्ञानिक विचलन हुने र यसको असरले दाम्पत्य जीवनमा विश्वास र हार्दिकताको अभाव हुने भएकोले जोडी छनौटको क्रममा स्वस्थ पहिचानको मात्रा र प्रक्रिया जस्तो हुन्छ, त्यसको असर दाम्पत्य जीवनमा पनि प्रत्यक्ष रूपमा पर्दछ। त्यसैले अध्ययन गरिएका घटनाहरूमा अपेक्षित स्वस्थ पहिचानको स्थिति के कस्तो थियो भन्ने बारेमा तथ्य संकलन गरिएको छ।

तालिका नं. ६. स्वस्थ पहिचानको आधारमा जोडीको वितरण

विहेको प्रकार	स्वस्थ पहिचान भएका	स्वस्थ पहिचान हुन नपाएका
मागी विवाह	०	१३ (१००%)
प्रेम विवाह	४ (३६.४%)	७ (६३.७%)
कुल	४ (१६.६६%)	२० (८३.३३%)

स्रोत: स्थलगत सर्वेक्षण, २०४६।

अध्ययनको आँकडा (तालिका नं. ६) ले देखाएको सूचना अनुसार कुल पारपाचुके भएका मध्ये ८३% भन्दा बढी विवाहहरू स्वस्थ पहिचान हुन नपाइकनै विवाह गरिएको देखिन्छ। सूक्ष्मतम् रूपमा केलाउँदा मागी विवाहमा स्वस्थ पहिचानको स्थिति शुन्य रहेको देखिएको छ भने प्रेम विवाह भनिएका घटनाहरूमा पनि करिब ६३% जति प्रेम विवाह स्वस्थ पहिचानको अभावमा सृजीत भएका छन्। उपरोक्त तथ्यले के देखाउँछ भने समग्र मागी विवाहमा केटा-केटी (प्रत्याशी) लाई एक अर्कोलाई चिन्ने प्रक्रिया नै नदिइएको पुष्टी हुन्छ भने प्रेम विवाहमा पनि सतही परिचय र छलकपटका कृत्यहरू हुने गरेकोले समग्र आवश्यक पहिचान नभइकनै विवाहमा बाँधिएको देखिएको छ। प्रेम विवाहमा पनि छलकपट गर्ने प्रवृत्तिमा ६३.६% घटनामा पुरुषहरू दोषी देखिएका छन् भने ९.१% घटनामा महिला दोषी देखिएकी छन्। सामान्य अवस्थामा समाहित भएका घटना जम्मा २७.३% मात्र देखिन्छन्। समाजमा प्रचलित विवाहहरू चाहे मागी हुन वा प्रेम विवाह हुन, यिनीहरूमा अधिक मात्रामा अस्वस्थ प्रक्रियामा जोडी छनौट गर्ने गरिएको देखिनुले यी दुवैखाले शैलीलाई स्वस्थ प्रक्रिया मान्न सकिँदैन। तालिका नं. ६ मा स्वस्थ पहिचान भएका ४ जोडी प्रेम

विवाहिताहरूको पनि पारपाचुके भएको तथ्यले 'स्वस्थ पहिचान' ले मात्रै पनि पारपाचुके नरोकिने तथ्य देखाएको छ । ती चार जोडीहरूमा आपसी स्वस्थ पहिचान भए पनि समग्र कौटुम्बिक सम्बन्धको जालोको तर्फबाट हार्दिक सम्मति प्राप्त नभएकोले यिनीहरूमा दाम्पत्य विखण्डन देखा परेको हो ।

विवाह सम्बन्धी निर्णयमा हार्दिक सम्मतिको स्थिति : हाम्रो जस्तो ग्रामीण सामाजिक पृष्ठभूमिमा विवाहले एक स्त्री र अर्को पुरुष बीच सम्बन्ध स्थापित गर्ने कुरा मात्र नभइ एउटा परिवार र अर्को परिवारका बीचमा पनि सम्बन्ध स्थापित गराउँछ । व्यक्ति पारिवारिक व्यवस्थाको एक इकाई मात्र हो र उसका क्रियाकलापले पारिवारिक व्यवस्थाको सन्तुलनमा प्रत्यक्ष प्रभाव पार्ने भएकोले उसका हरेक क्रियाकलापहरू र पारिवारिक व्यवस्थाका बीच पारस्परिक सम्बन्ध रहन्छ । विवाहद्वारा एउटा नयाँ कौटुम्बिकसम्बन्धको जालो निर्माण हुन्छ । त्यो कौटुम्बिकसम्बन्धको जालोमा कुल पक्षको परिवार र कुटुम्ब पक्षको परिवारका बीचको सामनजस्यता हुन्छ । यसका प्रत्यक्ष क्रियाशील पक्ष 'वर' र 'कन्या' का क्रियाकलाप तथा उनीहरूको दाम्पत्य सम्बन्धको प्रभावकारितामा तिनै कौटुम्बिकताका अन्य सहयोगी तत्वहरूको दृष्टिकोण र अन्तरक्रियात्मक सम्बन्धले प्रभाव पार्दछ । यसकारण विवाहका बारेमा व्यक्तिले निजी रूपमा लिएको निर्णयलाई कौटुम्बिकताले सम्मति दिएमा मात्र वैवाहिकता सन्तुलित रूपमा सञ्चालित हुन सक्छ, अन्यथा यस्तो सम्मतिको अभावमा विचलित हुनपुग्छ । विवाहको निर्णय गर्दा वर र कन्याका पक्षबाट कुनै पनि लोभलालच र करकाप तथा विवशतामा नपारी हार्दिक रूपमा विवाहको सम्मति हुनु सफल दाम्पत्यको लागि दोश्रो आवश्यक शर्त देखिएको छ । पहिले स्वस्थ पहिचान नै नभई गरिएको सम्मतिलाई हार्दिक सम्मतिको दर्जामा राख्न नहुने देखिन्छ । त्यस्तै वर र कन्याका बीचको सम्मतिपूर्ण निर्णयसँग कौटुम्बिकताका कुल र कुटुम्ब पक्षका परिवारहरूबाट पनि त्यो विवाहलाई हार्दिक सम्मति दिइएको भए मात्र नवीन वैवाहिक सम्बन्धलाई जीवन्तरूप दिनका लागि उपयोगी वातावरण निर्माण हुन सक्ने देखिन्छ । कौटुम्बिकीयको कुनै एकमात्र तत्व चाहे प्रत्यक्ष क्रियाशील तत्व (दम्पती) को होस् / अथवा आंगिक तत्वहरूको होस् यिनको हार्दिक सम्मति बिना विवाह गरियो भने त्यस्तो वैवाहिक जीवनको जीवन्ततामा धेरै कठिनाइहरू आइपरेका छन् । त्यस्तो विचलित परिस्थितिमा कौटुम्बिकीयका अधिकांश क्रियाकलापहरू वैवाहिकता टिकाउन भन्दा पनि टुटाउन तर्फ बढी क्रियाशील हुन पुगेका देखिन्छन् ।

तालिका नं. ७ हार्दिक सम्मतिको आधारमा जोडीहरूको वितरण

(क)				
विवाहको प्रकार	सम्मति थियो		सम्मति थिएन	
प्रेमविवाह	४	३६.४%	७	६३.६%
मागी विवाह	३	२३%	१०	७७%
कूल	७	२९.२%	१७	७०.८%

(ख)				
जाति	सम्मति थियो		सम्मति थिएन	
उपाध्याय	२	४०%	३	६०%
जैशी	४	४०%	६	६०%
क्षेत्री	१	११%	८	८९%
कूल	७	२९.२%	१७	७०.८%

स्रोत: स्थलगत अध्ययन, २०५६।

यस अध्ययनका क्रममा उत्तरदाताहरूसँग उनीहरूको विवाहको निर्णयमा यहाँ परिभाषित गरिए बमोजिमको हार्दिक सम्मति भए नभएको बारेमा पनि अन्तरक्रिया गरिएको थियो। उल्लेखित आँकडा (तालिका नं. ७) ले ७०% भन्दा बढी विवाहहरू हार्दिक सम्मतिको अभावमा सृजना गरिएको तथ्य देखाएको छ। हार्दिक सम्मतिको अभावमा वा करकाप र छलकपटका आधारमा विवाह गर्ने प्रवृत्ति प्रेम विवाह र मागी विवाह दुवैमा देखिएको छ। मागी विवाह ७७% घटना तथा प्रेम विवाहका ६३% भन्दा बढी घटनाहरूमा पूर्ण रूपमा मञ्जुरीको वातावरण नभइकन विवाह गरिएको तथ्य (तालिका ७ क) ले देखाएको छ। अधिकांश विहेहरू तयारी क्रमकै हार्दिक सम्मतिको अभावले गर्दा विखण्डनको बीज रोपिएको सूचीत गर्दछ। हार्दिक सम्मतिको वेवास्ता गर्दै विवाह गर्ने प्रवृत्तिको शिकार हुने आँकडालाई जातीय तहमा केलाएर हेर्ने हो भने उपाध्याय र जैशी ब्राह्मण परिवारमा ६०% घटना छन् भने क्षेत्री परिवारमा अझ बढी ८९% घटनाहरू प्रभावित देखिन्छन्। जेहोस उल्लेखित आँकडाले सवैखाले जातीय तह र वैवाहिक शैलीमा समय कौटुम्बिकसम्बन्धको जालो र अन्य प्रत्यक्ष प्रत्याशीहरूकै आपसमा हार्दिक सम्मति वा पूर्ण मञ्जुरीको अभावमा विवाह गराइएकोले ति विवाह कमजोर बनाउन प्रेरित गरेको देखिएको छ।

वैवाहिक जीवनमा सह-अस्तित्वपूर्ण मर्यादाको स्थिति : वैवाहिक सम्बन्ध भनेको भौतिक तथा मानसिक सम्बन्ध पनि हो । विवाहसँगै दुई स्त्री-पुरुष नयाँ कौटुम्बिकीयका सहकर्मी हुन्छन् । यी दुई व्यक्ति एउटै दाम्पत्यमा रहे पछि सामाजिक, साँस्कृतिक तथा पारिवारिक र नागरिक मूल्य, मान्यता, मर्यादा, हक-अधिकार उत्तरदायित्व र जिम्मेवारीसँगै भौतिक कृत्य र नैतिक अस्तित्वको सम्बन्ध रहेको हुन्छ । दुवै पक्षले आफ्नो कौटुम्बिकीय भित्र आफ्नो महत्व स्थापित गराउन चाहन्छ र क्षमता, प्रतिभा विकास र परिचालन गर्न चाहन्छ । यो चाहनाको मात्रा सबैमा हुन्छ । कौटुम्बिकताका आंगिक सदस्यहरूमा नव दम्पती र अन्य पक्ष बीचमा हुने अन्तरक्रियात्मक सम्बन्ध तथा स्वयम् पति-पत्नी बीचमा हुने अन्तरक्रियात्मक सम्बन्धमा सह अस्तित्वपूर्ण मर्यादाको स्थिति उच्च भएमा पारिवारिक जीवन सन्तुलित र सौहार्दपूर्ण रहन्छ । यदि यहाँ पति पत्नी बीचमा आपसी व्यवहारमा एकले अर्काको अस्तित्वलाई सम्मान गर्न नसके, दम्पती मध्येबाट आफ्नो सहयोगीको पक्ष (कुल वा कुटुम्ब) का सदस्य बीचको अन्तरक्रियामा अस्तित्व स्वीकार गरिएजस्तो नभएमा, एक अर्को पक्ष बीच मर्यादापूर्ण व्यवहारको अन्तरसम्बन्ध हुन नसकेमा त्यसले दाम्पत्य जीवनमा नकारात्मक असर पार्ने देखिएको छ । पति-पत्नी बीचको अन्तरसम्बन्धमा एकले अर्कोलाई मर्यादा र सह अस्तित्वको रूपमा व्यवहार गर्न सकेन भने त्यसले दम्पतीका हरेक अन्तरक्रियात्मक व्यवहारमा नकारात्मक प्रभाव पार्ने र फलतः दाम्पत्य दुर्घटनामा पर्ने गरेको देखिएको छ । यस्ता अन्तक्रियाका सूचांकहरूमा सम्मान र सौहार्दता, निर्णय प्रक्रियामा उत्साहपूर्ण सहभागीताको अवसर, कुल र कुटुम्बप्रति देखाउने व्यवहार र हेर्ने दृष्टिकोण लगायत आपसी मनोगत समर्पण (प्रेमपूर्ण सम्बन्ध) तथा एकलाई अर्काको व्यक्तित्व ओजपूर्ण र श्रद्धेय तथा सहभावको मान्यतामा क्रियाशील भएका अवस्थामा यस प्रकारको सह अस्तित्वपूर्ण मर्यादा एक अर्कोले एक अर्कोबाट, कौटुम्बिकसम्बन्धको जालो र कार्यात्मक पक्ष (पति-पत्नी) बाट अनुभव गरिने कुराहरू हुन् । दाम्पत्य जीवनमा विशेष गरी पति-पत्नी बीचमा र अरू पारिवारिक सदस्यबाट सबैले सबैमा अस्तित्वपूर्ण मर्यादाको अनुभूति गर्न सकेमा त्यो कौटुम्बिकसम्बन्धको जालो निरन्तर राख्न सबै सदस्य क्रियाशील हुन्छन् । यदि सह अस्तित्वपूर्ण मर्यादाको अनुभूति गर्न सकिएन भने विस्तारै-विस्तारै कौटुम्बिकीयका आंगिक तत्वहरूको संरचनागत क्रियाकलापमा असन्तुलन देखापर्दछ र असन्तुलनबाट एक अर्को पक्षमा आरोप प्रत्यारोप तथा दुश्मनीको भावना रोपीन जान्छ र स्वयम् कौटुम्बिकीयका आंगिक क्रियाकलापहरू नै त्यो 'सम्बन्ध विघटन गर्न पाए पिडा र तनावबाट मुक्त हुन पाइन्थ्यो र अर्को कौटुम्बिकीयको सृजना गर्ने बाटो खुले थियो' भन्ने चाहनामा क्रियाशील हुन थालेका देखिन्छन् । एउटा अचम्मको मनोवैज्ञानिक तथ्य के छ भने मान्छेहरू दाम्पत्य सम्बन्धमा कटुता भित्रिएमा त्यसमा आफू खुम्चिएर समझदारी गर्नुभन्दा त्यसलाई विघटन गरेर मुक्त हुने चाहना राख्दछ र पछाडी अर्कोसँग पुनः विवाह गरेर सुखमय पारिवारिकता निर्माण गर्ने कल्पना गर्न थाल्दछ । यसरी दाम्पत्य जीवनमा सह-अस्तित्वपूर्ण मर्यादाको स्थिति अत्यन्त उच्चस्तरमा प्रखर र प्रभावी भएमा दाम्पत्य जीवन उर्जाशील हुने सम्भावना

देखिन्छ भने यसको विपरित सहअस्तित्व पूर्ण मर्यादाको स्थिति कमजोर र अप्रखर हुन पुगेमा दाम्पत्य जीवन निरासपूर्ण र कटुतापूर्ण बन्ने गरेको देखिन्छ ।

तालिका नं. ८ सह अस्तित्वपूर्ण मर्यादाको आधारमा लैङ्गिक वितरण

लिंग	विहेको प्रकार	मर्यादापूर्ण दाम्पत्य थियो		मर्यादापूर्ण दाम्पत्य थिएन	
महिला	माँगी विवाह	१	८%	१२	९२%
	प्रेम विवाह	०	०%	११	१००%
पुरुष	माँगी विवाह	२	१५%	११	८५%
	प्रेम विवाह	०	०%	११	१००%

स्रोत: स्थलगत सर्वेक्षण, २०५६ ।

अध्ययनसँग सरोकार घटनामा पाइएको तथ्याङ्क (तालिका नं. ८) अनुसार अत्याधिक परिवारभित्र सहअस्तित्वपूर्ण मर्यादाको अभाव भएको पाइएको छ । महिलाहरूको अभिमतमा ९२% माँगी विवाहबाट सृजित परिवारमा तथा सबै (१००%) प्रेम विवाहबाट सृजित परिवारमा सहअस्तित्वपूर्ण मर्यादाको व्यवहारको अभाव भएको थियो भन्ने तथ्य पाइएको छ भने पुरुषहरूको अभिमतमा ८५% मागी विहेका परिवारभित्र सहअस्तित्वपूर्ण वातावरण नभएको तथ्य स्वीकार गरिनुका साथै प्रेम विवाहबाट सृजित परिवारमा सहअस्तित्वपूर्ण मर्यादाको भावना शून्य रहने गरेको देखिएको छ । अभिभावकको रोजाईमा, पण्डितबाट वैदिक विधि विधानका प्रक्रिया र मन्त्रोच्चारण गरेर धर्मको आडम्बरमा गरिएका माँगी विवाहमा जहाँ सहधर्म र सहचार्यताका लागि सप्तपदीको क्रममा प्रतिज्ञा गरेर अनुबन्धित भएका विवाहमा पनि पत्नीले मर्यादापूर्ण अस्तित्व ग्रहण गर्न पाउँदैनन्, पुरुषले धर्मपत्नीलाई आफ्नी अर्धाङ्गीनीको रूपमा सम्मान गर्न सक्दैनन् वा त्यो खाले अवस्था पत्नीबाट सृजित हुँदैन भने वा कौटुम्बिकता भित्रै एक देखि अर्को शंकालु, असमर्पित र मर्यादा अभाव तथा ऊर्जाविहीनताको अनुभूति गर्न पुग्दछ भने निश्चय नै माँगी विवाहको प्रक्रियामा कहिँ गम्भिर त्रुटी भएको हुनु पर्दछ । त्यस्तै गरी स्वेच्छाले स्वतन्त्र रूपमा मन पराएर अनुबन्धित भएका भनिएका प्रेम विवाहमा भन यस्तो दाम्पत्य जीवनमा सहअस्तित्वपूर्ण मर्यादाको स्थिति अत्यन्तै नाजुक, शून्य अवस्थामा रहनु, सतप्रतिशत मर्यादा विहिनताको अनुभूति बर-वधु तथा कौटुम्बिकीयले नै गर्न पुग्नु अझ तितो यथार्थ हुन पुगेको छ । यसले के देखाएको छ भने यहाँ अभ्यास गरिएका प्रेम विवाह यथार्थमा प्रेमपूर्ण थिएनन्, स्वार्थपूर्ण थिए, समर्पण र श्रद्धामुखी भन्दा भोगवादी र सौदावाजी थिए भन्ने तथ्य पुष्टि गर्दछ । समाजमा क्रियाशील भएका दुवै खाले विवाहमा अत्यन्त असहिष्णु स्थिति भित्रिएको संकेत गर्दछ र हामीले सृजना गरेका दाम्पत्य शैलीहरू हाम्रै लागि अत्यन्त उर्जाहीन हुँदै गइरहेको तथ्य देखापर्दछ । पुरुषहरूमा विद्यमान लैङ्गिक अहमता र महिलाहरूप्रति हेरिने 'भोग्या' को

दृष्टिकोणले महिलाहरूले मर्यादा विहीनताको अनुभूति महशुस गर्नुपर्ने अवस्था अभै रहेमा परिवारको मर्यादा र प्रतिष्ठालाई आफ्नै मर्यादा र प्रतिष्ठा भै जतन गर्ने क्षमता महिलाहरूमा फितलो हुँदै गएमा संकुचित दाम्पत्यहरू अभै भत्कने क्रम तीब्र रूपमा बढ्ने संकेत यस अध्ययनले देखाएको छ । घरभित्रको निजी मामिला भनेर दिइने पीडाहरूमा संगठित आवाजहरूले विद्रोह गर्दैछन् र राज्यको कानूनले न्याय बहालीको प्रयास गर्दैछ ।

दाम्पत्य जीवनमा सन्तुलित यौनिकताको स्थिति : यो विषय निकै जटिल छ । यस विषयमा खोजी गर्न पनि निकै जटिलताहरू पार गर्नु परेको थियो, निकै जोखिमहरू उठाउनु परेको थियो । यहाँ यौनिकता भन्नाले वृहत्तर यौनिकतालाई समेट्न खोजिएको छ । यहाँ यौनको संकुचित अर्थलाई मात्र किमार्थ पनि 'फोकस' गरिएको छैन, समग्र दाम्पत्य जीवनमा पति-पत्नी बीचका आपसी सौहार्दता, उर्जाशील यौन जीवन र सन्तुलित सहवासको स्थितिहरूलाई दाम्पत्य जीवनको एउटा मनोवैज्ञानिक पक्षको रूपमा महत्त्व दिइनु आवश्यक देखिएकोले र अध्ययनको निचोडमा यस विषयका सूचनाले विशेष हैसियत राख्ने भएकोले समेट्न खोजिएको छ ।

यौन प्राणीको प्राकृतिक विशेषता हो । प्राकृतिक जीवन शैलीबाट विकासशील हुँदै आउने क्रममा हिन्दूहरूमा विद्यमान यौनिक सन्तुलनका वास्तविकताहरूलाई 'खुल्ला बहस' गर्न नसकिने विषयका रूपमा व्याख्या गर्न थालियो । पौराणिक साहित्य श्रीमद्भागवतको दृश्यहरूमा 'महादेव' र 'पार्वती' का यौनिक प्रसँगसँगै स्वस्थानी कथामा महादेव र सतीको आपसी यौनिक सहकार्य नहुँदा सतीले आत्महत्या गर्न पुगेकी^१ र एक्लो महादेवमा आएको अर्धचेत अवस्थाका बारेमा प्रशस्त व्याख्या गरेको पाइन्छ । दाम्पत्य जीवनमा यौनिकताको मौलिक महत्त्व हुने भएकोले पराशर आदि ऋषिहरूले यौन विकलाङ्ग सहयात्री भएमा दोश्रो वैवाहिक जीवन निर्माण गर्न सकिने तर्कहरू उठाएको तथ्य अधिल्लो अध्यायमा चर्चा गरीसकिएको छ । यौन जीवन एक कला हो र यसलाई प्रेममय बनाउन सकिन्छ भन्नेमत आर्यहरूमा भएको तथ्य यौनशास्त्री 'वात्सायन' लाई आर्य साहित्यमा समेटिएको प्रसँगले पुष्टि मिल्दछ । प्राचीन विवाह शैलीहरूमा देखिएका चरित्रहरूले पनि मानव यौनिकताका लागि विवाह अपरिहार्य देखाइएको छ र यसले विवाह तथा दाम्पत्यताका लागि पनि यौनिकता अपरिहार्य भएको स्वीकार गर्दछ ।

मानव शरीर आफैमा एउटा व्यवस्था हो । यो व्यवस्था सन्तुलन र संचालनका लागि प्राकृतिक रूपमा नै शरीरभित्र विभिन्न जैविक इकाईहरू कृयाशील रहेका हुन्छन् । शरीर व्यवस्थाको संरचनाभित्र जैविक तालमेलमा मनोवैज्ञानिक व्यवस्था पनि क्रियाशील भएको हुन्छ । मानव क्रियाशीलताका लागि उसको शारीरिक संरचनाका सबै आंगिक तत्वहरूको कार्यात्मक सम्बन्ध रहन्छ र मान्छे स्वस्थ देखिन्छ । मान्छे स्वस्थ रहनका लागि शारीरिक, मानसिक र सामाजिक रूपमा स्वस्थ हुनुपर्दछ भन्ने मत विश्व स्वास्थ्य संगठनले समेत पुष्टि गरेको छ । मानव सन्तुलित हुनका लागि उसको आंगिक व्यवस्थाका सबै इकाईहरूले सन्तुलित रूपमा कार्य गर्न पाउनु पर्छ र सबै आंगिक तत्वहरूको कार्यात्मक सम्बन्ध

अविचलित रहनुपर्दछ । मानव सृष्टिको प्रक्रिया नै यौनिक क्रियाकलापका माध्यमबाट हुने भएकोले मानव शरीरमा प्रशस्तमात्रामा यौनिक ग्रन्थीहरू क्रियाशील छन् । तिनले आफ्नो सन्तुलित क्रियाकलाप पाएनन् भने शरीर व्यवस्थामा विचलन आउन सक्छ । यो विचलनले मान्छेलाई मनोगत प्रभाव पार्दछ । उसका अरू सांसारिक दैनिकीहरूमा पनि विचलन आउन सक्छ । यसै तर्कलाई आत्मसात गर्दै यस अध्ययनमा यस पक्षले पनि कतै प्रभाव पारेको हुनसक्छ भन्ने लागेर उत्तरदाताहरूको यौनिक जीवनका बारेमा पनि खोजी गर्ने प्रयास गरिएको छ ।

तालिका नं. ९ पारपाचुकी जोडीको यौन जीवनको स्थिति

विवाह	पूर्ण सन्तुलन	कम सन्तुलन	असन्तुलन
प्रेम	०	१० (९१%)	१ (९%)
मागी	०	३ (२४%)	१० (७६%)
कुल	०	१३ (५४%)	११ (४६%)

स्रोत: स्थलगत सर्वेक्षण, २०५६ ।

अध्ययनको आँकडामा यौन जीवनमा पूर्ण रूपले सन्तुलन भएका जोडी कोही पनि भेटिएनन् । ५४% जोडीले कम सन्तुलन रहेको उल्लेख गरेका छन् भने ४६% जोडीले त यौन जीवन असन्तुलित रहेको व्यक्त गरे । विवाहगत रूपमा केलाउने हो भने मागी विवाहमा ७६% जोडी असन्तुलित यौन जीवनको प्रतिनिधित्व गर्दछन् । तर प्रेम विवाह गरेका ९१% ले मात्र केही सन्तुलन भएको तथ्य अगाडी सारेका छन् ।

यौन जीवनका बारेमा प्रतितालिकीकरण गरेर हेर्दा विवाह गर्दाको प्रक्रियाले पनि उनीहरूको यौन जीवनमा प्रभाव पार्ने गरेको तथ्य देखापरेको छ । विवाह गर्दा एक अर्कासँग खुल्ला छलफल र स्वस्थ पहिचान भएर विवाहित बनेका जोडीहरूको तुलनामा स्वस्थ पहिचान हुन नपाइकनै विवाहित भएका जोडीहरूमा यौनजीवन असन्तुलित हुनेको मात्रा बढी छ । यस तथ्यले विवाहका जोडीहरूमा स्वस्थ पहिचान र मात्रा नभएका जोडीमा यौन जीवन असन्तुलित र कमजोर हुनेहरू बढी मात्रामा भेटिएका छन् ।

त्यस्तै गरी हार्दिक सम्मति वा पूर्ण मन्जुरीमा भएका विवाह गरेका जोडीहरूमा भन्दा यो अवसर नभएका जोडीहरूमा बढी मात्रामा 'असन्तुलन' र 'कमजोर सन्तुलन' भेटिएको तथ्य आँकडाले देखाएको छ ।

तालिका नं १० पहिचान र सम्मतिमा आधारमा यौन जीवनको वितरण

यौन जीवन	स्वस्थ पहिचान भएका व्यक्ति	स्वस्थ पहिचान नभएका व्यक्ति	कुलव्यक्ति	सम्मतिमा विहे भएका व्यक्ति	पूर्ण सम्मति नभएका व्यक्ति	कुल व्यक्ति
असन्तुलित	२	२०	२२	६	१६	२२
कम सन्तुलित	६	२०	२६	८	१८	२६
जम्मा	८	४०	४८	१४	३४	४८

स्रोत: स्थलगत सर्वेक्षण, २०५६।

उल्लेखित तालिका १० मा देखिएको 'असन्तुलित' आँकडासँगै अर्को कुरा के पनि जोडिएको छ भने एउटै जोडीमा पनि एउटा पक्षले आफ्नो यौन जीवन सन्तुलित भएको दावी गर्दछ भने अर्को पक्षले सन्तुलन नभएको कुरा उठाएकोछ। यसले शोधकर्तालाई अर्को जिज्ञाशा उठायो कि एउटै दाम्पत्य जीवनका यौन सहकर्मिमा एउटा असन्तुष्ट रहने र अर्को सन्तुष्ट रहने अवस्था कसरी सृजना हुन्छ ? अध्ययनमा असन्तुलित भएको कुरालाई पुष्टि गर्न उत्तरदाताले दिइएका तर्क प्रमाणहरू कतिसम्म प्रमाणिक हुन त ? कतै पारपाचुके भइसकेपछि विपक्षी प्रतिको पूर्व आग्रहका कारण 'सन्तुलित हुन नसकेको' आरोप लगाएका हुन कि ? भन्ने प्रश्न उठायो। अधिकांश जोडीहरूमा महिला पक्षले 'सन्तुलन नपाएको' तथ्य अगाडि आएकोले यसमा भेटिएका तथ्यहरू कतिसम्म सत्यताको नजिक छन् भन्ने बारेमा खोजी गर्न पुनः परीक्षण गर्नु आवश्यक देखियो। पुनः परीक्षणका क्रममा पारपाचुकीहरूले उठाएका यौन जीवनका सवालहरू कतिसम्म सत्यताको नजिक छन् भन्ने कुरा पारपाचुके नभएका विवाहिताहरूसँग प्रश्नावली अनुसूचीको माध्यमबाट सूचना संकलन गरि परीक्षण गरियो। प्रश्नावली अनुसूची खुल्ला प्रकृतिको थियो र पाँचवटा यौनिकतासँग सम्बन्धित प्रश्नहरू सामेल गरिएको थियो। सो पुनः परीक्षण अध्ययनमा १८ देखि ३८ वर्षसम्मका १० जना महिलाहरूको सहभागिता रहेको छ। र पारपाचुकीहरूले उठाएका सवालहरूमा ८०% ले 'आफूले त्यस्तै अनुभव गरेकोले 'सत्यको नजिक छ' भन्ने जवाफ दिएका छन् भने यौन जोडीबाट अतृप्त रहेको अवस्थामा बहालवाला जोडीप्रति घृणा तथा रिस उठनु र वैकल्पिक यौन जोडीको चाहना हुन्छ भन्ने तथ्यलाई ७०% पुनः परीक्षणका उत्तरदाताले पनि स्वीकार गरेका छन्। पुनः परीक्षणमा ८०% विवाहिताहरूले पुरुषहरू स्वार्थी र असहयोगी हुने गरेको आरोप लगाउँदै आफ्नो भोगाईको तथ्यगत पुष्टि दिएका छन्।

उल्लेखित यौनिकता सम्बन्धी तथ्यले दाम्पत्य जीवनका अन्तरक्रियाहरूमा यौन जीवनको सन्तुलनको अवस्थाले पनि महत्वपूर्ण प्रभाव पार्दछ र दाम्पत्य जीवनको स्थायित्वमा यो पक्षले पनि भूमिका खेल्दछ भन्ने तथ्य देखाएको छ।

विवाह र दाम्पत्य विचलनमा हस्तक्षेपी पक्षका प्रभावहरूको विवेचना

दाम्पत्य विचलनका बारेमा खोजी गर्दा त्योसँग सम्बद्ध समय सूचनाहरूलाई केलाइनु पर्दछ भन्ने मान्यताले यहाँ केही सरोकारमूलक विविध सूचनाहरूलाई समेट्न खोजिएको छ। यी सूचनाहरूले अध्ययनको फराकिलो परिधिभित्र विभिन्न पक्षबाट केरकार गर्दै र मन्थन हुँदै निस्कने निचोडलाई अभ्र प्रखर र सवल रूपमा उभ्याउन टेवा पुऱ्याउनेछ भन्ने ध्येय राखिएको छ। अवधारणागत ढाँचा (Conceptual frame work) मा उठाइएका अभिमतहरूलाई पुष्टी गर्न पनि यी सूचनाहरूको महत्त्व रहने छ।

विवाहका चरित्रहरूको विश्लेषण : पोखरा उपत्यकाका तागाधारीहरूले अभ्यास गरेको वैवाहिक चरित्रमा परम्परागत रुढीको छाप विद्यमान हुनुका साथै स्वस्थ विवाह र पवित्र वैवाहिकताका दृष्टिकोणबाट हेर्ने हो भने कमसल वैवाहिक चरित्र क्रियाशील भएको पाइएको छ। यो कमसल वा नालायक वैवाहिक चरित्रलाई निरन्तर क्रियाशील गराउनमा यहाँका सामाजिक व्यवस्था र पारिवारिक व्यवस्था उत्तिकै जिम्मेवार छन्। यहाँको वैवाहिक चरित्रलाई 'नालायक' भन्नुको अर्थ 'लायक' नहुँदै वा लायक हुनुपर्ने अवस्थालाई वेवास्ता गर्दै विवाह गरिने प्रवृत्तिर्तर्फ लक्षित छ भन्न खोजिएको हो। नालायक वैवाहिक चरित्रलाई निरन्तरता दिने प्रवृत्तिलाई आँकलन गर्न निम्न क्रियाकलापलाई अवलोकन गर्न सकिन्छ।

(क) काँचो उमेरमा विवाह

विवाहका लागि योग्य हुनु भनेको गृहस्थ आश्रममा प्रवेश गर्ने हैसियत राख्ने व्यक्तित्व बन्न सक्नु हो। यो हैसियतका लागि शारीरिक, मानसिक र सामाजिक परिपक्वताहरू हासिल गरीसकेको हुनुपर्दछ। तर अध्ययनमा समेटिएका नमुना घटनाहरूमा यो मूल परिपक्वताहरूलाई वेवास्ता गर्दै काँचो (अपरिपक्व) उमेरमा विवाह गराइएको छ। बाल विवाहको अवशेष बोकेका तागाधारीहरूमा काँचो उमेरमा विवाह गराउँदा कति पनि हीनताबोध छैन। अध्ययनको समय वैयक्तिक अध्ययनका नमूना घटनाहरूमा ६२% भन्दा बढी महिलाहरूलाई १९ वर्ष भित्रको उमेरमा विवाह गराइएको छ (बराल, २०५७: ता. नं. ८)। दाम्पत्य जीवनको अगुवाको हैसियत दावी गर्ने २९% भन्दा बढी पुरुषहरू पनि यस्तै काँचो उमेरमा विवाहित भएका छन्। राज्य व्यवस्थाले बाल विवाहलाई कानुन तः निषेध गरे पनि विद्यमान सामाजिक व्यवहारमा काँचो उमेरभित्र विवाह गर्न कुनै रोकटोक छैन। 'विवाहका लागि स्त्री 'रजोवती' हुनु र पुरुष वीर्यवान हुनुलाई मात्र पूर्ण योग्यता मान्न सकिँदैन, सामाजिक र मानसिक परिपक्वताको पनि उत्तिकै दरकार पर्दछ', ३५ वर्ष नाघेका महिला उत्तरदाताले अपेक्षित परिपक्वताको बारेमा उल्लेख गर्ने क्रममा बताए। 'कन्यादान गर्न र बुहारी भित्र्याउन अरू अत्यावश्यक परिपक्वताका कुरालाई वेवास्ता गर्दै अपरिपक्व सन्तानको विवाह गराउने अभिभावकहरू, यसलाई सम्मति दिने सामाजिक अगुवाहरू र विधिको खोल ओढाईदिने पुरोहितहरूको अदूरदर्शी र पाखण्डी व्यवहारले यस्ता घटनाहरू

दिनप्रति दिन थपिदै गएका छन्, फोकस ग्रुप छलफलमा अधिकांश महिला प्रतिनिधि र अन्य कानून व्यवसायीहरूले पुरोहित पनि दोषी भएको दावी गर्दै उल्लेख गरे ।

(ख) हतारको विवाह

विवाहबाट जीवन्त दाम्पत्य सम्बन्ध स्थापना गरिने भएकोले यसमा प्रवेश गर्नुपूर्व दुवै प्रत्याशीले एक अर्कोलाई आफ्नो लागि उर्जाशील जोडी हुनसक्ने कि नसक्ने भन्ने बारेमा स्पष्ट छानविन र जाँच पडताल गर्न पाउनुपर्छ । तर यहाँ भेटिएका वैवाहिक घटनाहरूमा विवाहका प्रत्याशीहरूलाई आफ्नो प्रस्तावित जोडीका बारेमा नालीवेली खोजीको पर्याप्त अवसरका लागि आवश्यक समयको अन्तराल नै नराखी हतारमा विवाह गराइएको छ । यो प्रवृत्ति प्रेम विवाह र मागी विवाह दुवैमा देखिएको छ । अधिकांश जोडीहरूमा प्रसंग चलेको १८ घण्टा देखि ४ दिनभित्रमा विवाह गराइएको छ । यस तथ्यको प्रमाणका लागि ५३.८% मागी विहे प्रसंग चलेको ४ दिन भित्रै विहे भएका छन्, अरू १५% को एक हप्ता र करीब ३१% को १० दिन पछि विहे भएको देखिन्छ । त्यस्तै प्रेम विहे गर्ने जोडीमा क्रमशः १८ घण्टा, २४ घण्टा र ४८ घण्टा भित्रमा केटाको निर्णयानुसार केटीले सिन्दुर पहिरिएको पाइएको छ । यी घटनामा एकले अर्कोलाई केही मात्र चिनेको, विवाह गर्ने सवालमा कौटुम्बिकताबाट मन्जुरी नलिएको समेत देखिन्छ ।

प्रस्तावित जोडीका बारे पारदर्शी पहिचानको अवसर नदिइ हतारमा गरिएका वैवाहिक कृत्यहरू 'हतपतको काम लतपत' जस्तै हुन पुगेका छन् र छानविन गर्ने चाहना राख्ने प्रत्याशी पक्षलाई आफ्नो भाग्यले दिएको घर खाने हो, भाग्य बलियो भए दैवले जुटाएकोमा राम्रो पर्दछ, "भनेर प्रारम्भिक अन्तरक्रियाको बेलामा नै विवाहको निर्णय लादिएको देखिन्छ । यसरी 'भाग्य' को हवाला दिएर काँचो उमेरका अपरिपक्व सन्तानमाथि अभिभावकको मन्जुरी र संरक्षकत्वका नाममा विवाह गराइनु 'अपाङ्गलाई वैशाखी दिएर म्याराथन दौडमा होडवाजी गराइनु' जस्तै भएको छ । फलस्वरूप हतारमा विहे गरेर फूर्सदमा पछुताउने क्रम दोहोरिएको छ ।

(ग) करकापे विवाह

आफ्ना भविष्यका बारेमा निर्णय लिन सक्ने रूपमा परिपक्व भैसकेका, युवा अवस्थामा पुग्न सकेका व्यक्तिहरूमा त प्रायः करकापको स्थिति कम मात्रामा आउला तर 'के गर्नु उपयोगी हो' भन्ने परिपक्व र दूरदर्शी निर्णय वा परामर्श लिन सक्ने परिपक्वता नहुँदै विवाहको प्रक्रियामा पुगेका किशोर-किशोरीहरूमा अभिभावक तथा नातेदारहरूले प्रशस्त छलकपट, शुभलाभको आश्वासन र करकापमा बाध्यात्मक स्थिति सृजना गरेर विवाह गराइएका घटनाहरू प्रशस्त मात्रामा भेटिएका छन् । छलकपटपूर्ण शैलीको लमी (कारोवारी) ले एउटाको 'वरणी' (विवाह) गराईदिएमा जोडीका पक्षबाट भौतिक शुभलाभ पाउने र परलोकमा स्वर्ग जाने बाटोमा पर्ने वैतरणी नदी सजिलै तर्न पाइने अभौतिक लालचमा

विवाहको निर्णय गराउन प्रेरित गर्दछ । सन्तानलाई विशेषगरी छोरीलाई परिपक्व अवस्थासम्म पर्खाउन चाहने अभिभावकलाई सामाजिक फटाहाहरूले 'छोरी विग्रिएपछि चाल पाउलास' भन्दै दबाव दिने प्रवृत्तिसँगै आफूलाई धर्मसंस्कारको ठेकेदार ठान्ने बुजुकहरूले मनुस्मृतिमा उल्लेख गरेको 'चौथो रजोवतीसम्म पुत्रीको विवाह नगरिदिने बाबुलाई पाप लाग्नेछ' भन्ने आख्यानको आधारमा मानसिक यातना दिएर कन्या अवस्थामै विवाह गर्न दबाव दिन्छन् र अभिभावकले त्यो प्रवृत्ति आफ्ना नव किशोरावस्थाका सन्तानहरूमाथि लादने गर्दछन् । उनीहरूले जानाजान आफ्नो सन्तानलाई गलत जोडीसँग तालमेल गराउन चाहेका हुन भन्न त सकिँदैन, तर जोडी उपयोगी हो वा होइन भनेर खोजी गर्न सक्ने दूरदर्शी तौरतरिकाको प्रयोगको अभाव तथा स्वयम् प्रत्याशीलाई निर्णय प्रक्रियामा सामेल गराउने प्रयत्न भएको पाइँदैन । यद्यपि विवाहको दिनमा "स्वयंवरण विधि" को अवलम्बन गरिएको बताइएला तर यथार्थमा करकाप र वाध्यात्मक परिस्थिति सृजना गरेर विवाह गराइएको पाइन्छ । यसरी शुभलाभको आश्वासन र करकापमा निर्णय लादने प्रवृत्तिले जोडीहरूमा शुभलाभको शर्त बमोजिमको माग गर्ने र करकापमा लादिएकोले त्यो विवाहप्रति असहयोगी दृष्टिले हेर्ने गरेको देखिएको छ । आफ्नो हैसियतलाई वेवास्ता गरेको रोष प्रकट गर्ने दम्पति बीच शत्रुताको भावना र क्रियाकलाप विकसित हुने अवस्थाका साथै प्रेम विवाह गर्ने जोडीहरूमा पनि दोष केलाउने र आरोप लगाउने प्रवृत्तिले दाम्पत्य सम्बन्धसँगै कटुता विकसित हुन थालेको पाइएको छ ।

(घ) पारदर्शी छलफल र सक्रिय केरकारको अभाव

विवाहको लागि जोडी चयन गर्ने क्रममा प्रत्याशीहरू बीच आवश्यक सूचनाहरू स्पष्ट र खुल्ला रूपमा नराखिने तथा 'माल हात पार्न' सक्दो कसरत गर्ने पर्याप्त छलछात्र गर्ने गरेका तथ्यहरू भेटिएका छन् । अध्ययनमा ९१% भन्दा बढी जोडीहरूले विवाहपूर्व पारदर्शी छलफल गर्न नपाएको कुरा व्यक्त गरेका छन् । त्यस्तै गरी केरकार गर्ने अवसरको खोजी गर्ने जोडीलाई पनि त्यो अवसर दिइँदैन । औपचारिक रूपमा केटाकेटीको 'देख-भेट' गराइएपछि 'मन पन्यो या परेन' तत्काल जवाफ दिनुपर्छ र विवाह आँट्ने काम अग्रजहरूले गर्दछन्, प्रत्याशीहरूले अतिरिक्त छानविन र अनौपचारिक परामर्श विना नै स्वीकृति दिनुपर्ने बाध्यता पारिन्छ । यो प्रवृत्तिले विवाहको निर्णय जुवाको दाउमा भाग लिए जस्तो देखिन्छ, नतिजा केही निश्चित हुँदैन, जे पनि हुन सक्छ ।

(ङ) पूर्ण मन्जुरी वा हार्दिक सम्मतिको अभावमा विवाह हुनु

यस पूर्वको बुँदामा अभिभावकको पहलमा गरिने माँगी विवाहमा प्रत्याशीहरूले निर्णय प्रक्रियामा सक्रिय सहभागिता लिन नपाएको प्रसंगमा त्यस्ता विवाहमा प्रत्याशीहरूलाई दबावको वातावरण सृजना गरिने प्रवृत्तिलाई उल्लेख गरिएको थियो । यो प्रसंग अलि व्यापक रूपमा केलाइनु आवश्यक देखिन्छ । समाजमा अभ्यास गरिएका विवाह, चाहे 'मागी' होस

वा 'प्रेम' भनिएको होस्, दुवै खाले विवाहमा हार्दिक सम्मतिको आधारमा निर्णय गरिने प्रक्रिया ज्यादै नाजुक देखिएको छ । अध्ययनमा समेटिएका घटनाहरूमै ७०% भन्दा बढी विवाहहरू हार्दिक सम्मतिको अभावमा गराइएका छन् । हार्दिक सम्मतिको अभावमा विवाह हुन पुगेकोमा माँगी विवाह मात्र हैन, करिब ४१% आँकडा असम्मतपूर्ण प्रेम विवाहले ओगटेको छ (तालिका नं. ७) ।

हार्दिक सम्मतिपूर्ण विवाह गराउने अभ्यास हिंजोका माँगी विवाहका उदाहरणहरूमा पनि भेटिएन, आजका 'प्रेम' विवाहमा पनि हुर्कन सकेको छैन । हिंजोका माँगी विवाहमा वर-वधुलाई "अनाडी छन्, जे भने पनि मान्छन्" भनेर परिवारको नियन्त्रण बढी लादियो, आजका प्रेम विवाहमा 'हाम्रो जीवनको फैसलामा अरूको के खाँचो' भनेर दूरदर्शी हेराई र कौटुम्बिकीयका अन्य पक्षको सम्मति बिना नै विवाह गर्न थालियो । माँगी विवाहमा कौटुम्बिक व्यवस्थाको मूल पक्ष वर-वधुको सम्मतिको मागलाई लत्याइयो भने प्रेम विवाहमा कौटुम्बिकीयको आधारपक्ष परिवार व्यवस्थाको सम्मति चाहिन्छ भन्ने कुरा लत्याइयो । यसरी यी दुवैखाले विवाहहरू, हिंजोका पद्धति र आजका पद्धतिहरूमा कौटुम्बिकीय कै हार्दिक सम्मति सृजना गरेर विवाहको प्रक्रियामा प्रवेश गर्ने अभ्यास गर्न सकिएको पाइँदैन । दुवै पक्षबाट आफ्नो "निर्णय गर्न पाउने हक"को दुरुपयोग भएकोले अन्ततोगत्वा कौटुम्बिकीयको संरचनागत सन्तुलनमा विचलन आएर दाम्पत्य सम्बन्ध दुर्घटनामा पर्ने गरेको देखिएको छ ।

दाम्पत्य चरित्रहरूको विश्लेषण : तागाधारीहरूले श्रद्धा गर्ने गरेका पौराणिक ग्रन्थहरूमा दाम्पत्यलाई आदि शक्ति वा 'अर्ध नारीश्वर' को मान्यताले हेर्ने गरिन्छ । परम्परागत मागी विवाह गर्नेहरूले अग्निहोत्रको क्रममा गरिने सप्तपदी कर्ममा अर्धाङ्गिनीको रूपमा सम्मान गर्दै जीवन्त सहयात्री, सहवासी र सहधर्मीको रूपमा क्रियाशील हुने प्रतिज्ञा गर्दछन् । वैदिक समाजको आदर्श दाम्पत्य प्रवृत्तिलाई अनुकरण गर्दै सपत्तिक र सधवा कर्ममा जुट्ने संकल्प गर्दछन् । त्यस्तै गरी प्रेम विवाह गर्नेहरू पनि किन कम हुन्थे र ? भरजीवन गतिशील खसम बन्ने कसम खाएर प्रणय जीवनमा अनुबन्धित हुन्छन् । तर व्यावहारिक अभ्यासमा यसका विपरीत करकाप, छलछात्र र शुभलाभको प्रलोभन तथा खरिद विक्रीको चरित्रमा यहाँका विवाहहरू धेरै पहिलेदेखि क्रियाशील हुने गरेका र अझै निरन्तर रहेका तथ्यहरू अगाडी आएका छन् (बराल २०५७) । समाजमा दिनप्रतिदिन बढ्दै गइरहेका पारपाचुकेका घटनाले दाम्पत्य विचलनको क्रम भन थपिएको प्रमाण दिन्छ । यसरी दिन प्रतिदिन दाम्पत्य विचलनको क्रम निरन्तर थपिनुले निश्चय नै समाजले अवलम्बन गरेको दाम्पत्य चरित्रमा कुनै 'दीर्घ रोग' लागेको हुनुपर्छ । यसरी दाम्पत्य विचलनको अवस्था आइपुग्नुमा तत्कालको कुनै घटनाभन्दा पनि विगतमा समाजले रोपेको विरुवा र हामीले मलजल गरी हुर्काएको बोटमा आज आएर फल देखा परेको हो । आज नमिठो फल देखा पर्नुमा निश्चय नै विरुवा रोप्ने क्रम र मलजल गर्ने क्रममा कुनै गम्भीर त्रुटी भएको हुनुपर्दछ । विवाह-विच्छेदका घटनाको निदान गर्ने क्रममा प्रारम्भिक अवस्थाका पक्षमा स्वस्थ पहिचान र हार्दिक सम्मति

नभएको तथ्य अधिल्लो प्रसंगमा आईसकेको छ । यस प्रसंगमा दाम्पत्य सञ्चालनका क्रममा देखिएका विशेष चरित्रलाई समेट्ने प्रयत्न गरिएको छ ।

(क) परिकल्पना विहीन दाम्पत्य

अध्ययनको दौरानमा समेटिएका जोडीहरूको परिपक्वता र पारिवारिक व्यवस्थापकीय क्षमताको मापन गर्न विवाह पछि उनीहरूले आफ्नो दाम्पत्य सञ्चालनको क्रमलाई गतिशील बनाउन के-कस्ता योजना तथा परिकल्पना तयार गरेका थिए भन्ने जिज्ञासा राखिएको थियो । अध्ययनको क्रममा विवाह पछि तत्काल वा वर्षौंसम्म पनि गतिशील जीवनका लागि कुनै खासै योजना तथा परिकल्पनाको प्रयास गरेको जोडी एउटा पनि भेटिएन । विवाहपूर्व नै जीवनको परिकल्पना बारे छलफल गरेर निर्णय लिने परिपक्व र दूरदर्शी अभ्यास त देखिएन नै, विहेपछि पारिवारिक व्यवस्थापनका लागि दम्पतिले कसरी गतिशील क्रियाकलापहरू अगाडि बढाउने भन्ने बारेमा पनि कुनै सोंच अगाडी सारिएको पाइएन । परम्परागत रूपमा “छोरो जवान भयो अब बुहारी ल्याउन सक्छ” भन्ने मान्यताले परिवारमा तलब दिनु नपर्ने महिला कामदार भित्र्याइएभैं बुहारी भित्र्याएर ‘जसोपछ तयसै टर्छ’ भन्ने शैलीमा दाम्पत्य क्रियाशील भए । केही शिक्षित र प्रेम विवाह गरेका जोडीहरूमा पनि छोराले ‘सर्वकाले निःशुल्क भोग्या’ यौन साथी पायो र परिवारले बुहारी पायो भन्ने मान्यताको क्रियाकलापमै सीमित भएको पाइयो । यो तथ्यले ती जोडीहरू सामाजिक तथा मानसिक रूपमा परिपक्व नहुँदै विवाहित भएको देखाउँछ ।

(ख) निर्णय प्रक्रियामा समान सहभागिताका अवसरको अभाव

पारिवारिक जीवन सन्तुलित रूपमा सञ्चालनका लागि पति-पत्नि दुवैको सक्रिय, उर्जाशील समान सहभागिता हुनु आवश्यक हुन्छ । हरेकले आफ्नो घरमा ‘मेरो पनि केही महत्व छ’ भन्ने अनुभूति गर्न सकेमा मात्र त्यो घर परिवारमा उ सृजनात्मक मानसिकतामा जुट्न सक्छ । विवाहको प्रारम्भिक प्रक्रियामा दुवैले सहधर्मी हुने वचन गर्दछन् तर दाम्पत्य जीवनका व्यवहारिक दिनहरूमा उनीहरूको मनोवैज्ञानिक चरित्र र दृष्टिकोणको भिन्नताले एक आपसमा व्यवहारिक तालमेल गराउन कठिन देखिन्छ । लोग्ने मान्छेहरूमा हाकिमी शैली हावी भएको छ भने पत्नीहरूलाई सहयोगी तथा दासीको रूपमा मात्र भूमिका निर्वाह गर्न प्रेरित गर्ने प्रवृत्ति अत्याधिक परिवार भित्र देखिएको छ । पितृसत्तात्मक सामाजिक बनोटले पैत्रिक उत्तराधिकार पुरुषहरूमा भएकाले विवाहद्वारा सम्बन्ध जोडिएकी स्त्रीलाई दोश्रो दर्जाको सदस्यको रूपमा हेर्ने प्रवृत्ति विद्यमान हुँदा पतिहरू आफ्नो महत्व न्यून भएकोमा मानसिक रूपमा पीडित रहेका छन् । अधिकांश परिवारमा छोरी र बुहारीलाई निर्णयात्मक भूमिकामा सहभागी गराउन परिवारका अग्रजहरूबाट ठाडो इन्कार हुने गरेको छ । ‘छोरी अर्काको घरमा जाने र बुहारी अर्को घरबाट आएकी’ भन्ने दृष्टिकोणको हेराइ विद्यमान रहनु तथा परिवारमा लोग्नेले कुनै पनि सवालको निर्णयात्मक अधिकार आफैले

नियन्त्रण गर्ने अवस्थामा पत्निलाई त्यो घरमा सहभागी, सहधर्मी स्वीकार गरिएको, मर्यादापूर्ण जीवन भोग्न पाएको अनुभूति हुनुको साटो प्रतिकूल मानसिकता हुन पुगेको छ। उनी सचेत भएर आफ्नो भूमिका लिन खोज्दा संकीर्ण हुर्काईको मानसिकताका पतिलाई सहज लाग्न सक्दैन र फलस्वरूप दम्पतिमा असमझदारी तथा अन्तरसंघर्षको स्थिति सृजना हुने गरेको देखिएको छ।

प्रेम विवाह गर्ने जोडीहरूमा केही समानता हुने प्रयास गरेको भए पनि पारिवारिक व्यवस्था तथा पुरुषहरूको आफ्नो निर्णय कार्यान्वयन गराउने प्रवृत्ति भएकोले अलि घुमाउरो पाराले पत्निको निर्णयात्मक हैसियत माथि नियन्त्रण गरेको देखिन्छ। 'मलाई विश्वास छ, मेरी पत्नीले मेरा कुरालाई काट्ने छैनन्, समर्थन गर्ने छिन्, मेरो निर्णयमा उनको विमति हुने छैन' भनेर पत्नीको विमति आउन सक्ने अवस्थालाई घुमाउरो नियन्त्रण गर्दछन्। 'हामी आपसी सल्लाह गर्नेछौं र उचित निर्णय लिनेछौं' भन्ने धारणा पुरुषहरूमा अत्यन्त न्यून भएकोले अध्ययनमा समेटिएका परिवार भित्रको दाम्पत्य जीवन 'वेद'ले उल्लेख गरेजस्तो पतित्व र पत्नित्वको आदर्श व्यवहारको अभावले ग्रस्त छ र आधुनिक धारणाले अवलोकन गर्दा नारी मर्यादाको अभाव विद्यमान छ।

(ग) असन्तुलित यौनिकता

विवाहलाई सामाजिक सम्मति भएको मानसिक सम्बद्धता वा मानसिक सम्बद्धता सृजना गर्ने सामाजिक क्रियाकलाप (mental attachment with social sanction or social function to create mental attachment) मान्न सकिन्छ। दाम्पत्य जीवनका लागि निर्माण गरिएको कौटुम्बिकता भित्र दुवै दम्पति लगायत अन्य सदस्यले त्यो सम्बन्ध वा संरचनाबाट भौतिक र सामाजिक सन्तुलन प्राप्त गर्नु परेभैं मानसिक आत्मीयताको पनि उत्तिकै खाँचो पर्दछ। दाम्पत्य जीवनका भौतिक संरचनाप्रति कस्को कस्तो व्यवहार वा अन्तरक्रिया रहन्छ भन्ने कुरामा व्यक्तिको मानसिक हैसियत र संकलित दृष्टिकोण वा आर्जित ज्ञान भण्डारका आधारमा परिवेशलाई कसरी बुझेको छ भन्ने कुरा महत्वपूर्ण हुन्छ। यो बुझाईमा व्यक्तिको मनोवैज्ञानिक चरित्रले महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निर्वाह गर्दछ। दाम्पत्य जीवनमा व्यक्तिगत यौनिकतासँग सम्बन्धित व्यवहारले उसको मनोवैज्ञानिक सन्तुलनमा प्रभाव पार्दछ र उसको मनोवैज्ञानिक सन्तुलनको प्रभाव उसका सम्बद्ध दाम्पत्य व्यवहार र अन्तरक्रियाहरूमा ढिलो-चाँडो जसरी पनि पर्दछ। त्यसैले दाम्पत्य जीवनको प्रभावकारीताका लागि अन्य पक्षसँगै यौनिकताको सन्तुलन पनि उत्तिकै महत्वपूर्ण हुन्छ।

अध्ययनमा समेटिएका घटनाहरूमा दम्पति बीचको यौन जीवन अत्यन्त असन्तुलित देखिएको छ। सन्तुलित यौनिकताको अनुभव व्यक्त गर्ने कुनै पनि दम्पति रहेनन्। कुल घटनाका ४६% घटनाका सरोकार पक्षले यौन जीवन असन्तुलित भएको व्यक्त गरेको तथ्य र ५४% घटनाले कम सन्तुलित भएको तथ्य (तालिका नं. ९) व्यक्त गरेको कुराले यहाँको दाम्पत्यमा यौनिकता विचलन हुने गरेको देखिन्छ। एउटै दम्पतीमा पुरुषले यौन जीवनबाट सन्तुष्ट रहेको वकालत गरे पनि महिलाले सन्तुष्टिपूर्ण यौन जीवन नपाएको, लोग्नेले

आफूलाई भोग्ने काम मात्र गरेको र नारी यौनिकताको मर्यादालाई कदर नगरेको तथ्य व्यक्त गरेका छन् । पारपाचुकीहरूको वैयक्तिक अनुभवबाट प्राप्त यौनिकता सम्बन्धी धारणालाई पुनः अरू विवाहितासँग परिक्षणका लागि धारणा संकलन गर्दा ८०% महिलाहरूले 'लोग्नेहरूको अनुदार र असहयोगी व्यवहारले महिलाहरूमा कुण्ठा, वितृष्णा र मानसिक रूपमा लोग्नेप्रति 'एलर्जी' हुने गर्दछ र वैकल्पिक व्यक्तिको चाहना तीब्र रूपमा बढ्ने गर्दछ' भन्ने तथ्य स्वीकार गरेका छन् ।

यौन जीवन विचलन हुनुमा एक अर्काप्रति आकर्षण नहुनु, विश्वास र श्रद्धा नहुनु तथा यौन क्रिडामा आफु ठगिएको, अतृप्त रहेको र आफूलाई आफ्नै जोडीले वेवास्ता गरेको अनुभूति हुने अवस्था सृजना हुनु प्रमुख कारण हुन भन्ने कुरा महिला उत्तरदाताहरूले उल्लेख गरेका छन् । आफु वाहेक अन्य व्यक्तिसँग यौन सम्बन्ध राखेको शंका तथा प्रमाणिकताका साथै सन्तान नहुने अवस्थाबाट पनि यौनिकतामा असर पारेको देखिएको छ । यद्यपि अध्ययनमा ५४% घटनाहरू निसन्तान भएको कारण विवाह विच्छेद गर्न प्रेरक भएको देखिए पनि ४६% घटनाहरू सन्तान भएर पनि यौनिकता विचलन रहेकोले मनोवैज्ञानिक यातना अनुभूति गरेको तथ्य व्यक्त गर्दछन् । अधिकांश महिलाहरूले पुरुषहरूलाई स्वार्थी, नालायक र पीडक भएको आरोप लगाएका छन् ।

(घ) पारिवारिक हस्तक्षेप

विवाह र दाम्पत्य सम्बन्धका बारेमा हाम्रो समाजमा व्यक्ति व्यक्तिको सम्बन्ध मात्र भन्दा पनि परिवार-परिवारको सम्बन्ध जोडिने गर्दछ । कौटुम्बिक व्यवस्थामा लोग्ने र स्वास्नीसँगै उनीहरूको सम्बद्ध परिवार पनि कौटुम्बिकसम्बन्धको जालोको प्रभावी अंग मान्नु पर्ने हुन्छ । दाम्पत्य सम्बन्धको प्रभावकारीतामा कौटुम्बिकीयको क्रियाकलापले भूमिका खेल्दछ । यस अध्ययनका अधिकांश घटनाहरूमा दम्पतीको आपसी रडाको चर्काउन र वैवाहिकता विघटन गराउनमा परिवारको हस्तक्षेपले अभूत प्रेरित गरेको पाइन्छ । बुहारीलाई अनावश्यक मानसिक यातना दिलाउन छोरालाई उकास्ने र छोराले परिवारका कनिष्ठ सदस्यका सामु पनि आफ्नी पत्नीको मर्यादामा आँच पुऱ्याउने कार्य गरेको तथा सासुहरूबाट "यस्ती केटी छोडी दे बाबु, जस्ता भने त्यस्ता केटी पाइन्छन्" भन्दै छोरालाई दाम्पत्य मर्यादा भत्काउन प्रेरित गरेका तथ्यहरू पनि देखापरेका छन् । नयाँ पुस्ताका बुहारीबाट चाकडी नपाएको भोकमा छोरालाई बुहारी विरुद्ध उकास्ने सासुहरू पनि भेटिएका छन् ।

विवाह-विच्छेदका मूल कारणहरूको विश्लेषण

समाजका हरेक व्यक्ति मौलिक छन् र तिनका जीवनचरित्र र धारणाहरू पनि भिन्न छन् । त्यसैले उनीहरूको दाम्पत्य विचलनका घटनालाई किन (Why) भनेर खोजी गर्दा प्रत्येकको भिन्न र मौलिक जवाफ आउन सक्छ र निचोडमा आम सम्भावना व्यक्त गर्न सकिँदैन । तर यो भन्दा वैज्ञानिक रूपमा विवाह विच्छेदको विश्लेषण गर्नका लागि 'पारपाचु'कैको परिस्थिति

कसरी सृजना भयो (How the situation for divorce is coming?)' भन्ने दृष्टिकोणबाट यसलाई केलाइनु बढी उपयोगी देखिन्छ । खुल्ला संरचनाका प्रश्नावलीका आधारमा घटनाका बारेमा संकलन गरिएका मौलिक अनुभवपूर्ण जवाफहरूलाई केलाएर 'पारपाचुके हुने अवस्था कसरी जन्मिएको छ ? भन्ने कुरा पत्ता लगाउने प्रयास गर्दा एउटै मात्र ढाँचामा सबैलाई अटाउन सकिँदैन र एउटै ढाँचाको जवाफमा पनि समग्रतालाई केलाउन सकिँदैन । सामाजिक घटना (विवाह-विच्छेद) कसरी देखापऱ्यो ? वा कुन कुन सामाजिक परिस्थितिले त्यो घटनालाई प्रेरित गरे ? सम्बन्धित पक्षहरूको कस्तो कस्तो गतिविधि र अन्तरक्रियात्मक व्यवहारले त्यो घटना सृजनामा भूमिका खेलेका छन् ? आदि सवालहरूलाई ध्यानमा राखेर घटनालाई छानविन गर्दा उनीहरूको समग्र दाम्पत्य व्यवस्थालाई विभिन्न परिक्षणका ढाँचामा राखेर केलाइनु उपयुक्त हुन्छ । यस कारणले पारपाचुकेका कारणहरू केलाउन तीनवटा ढाँचामा राखेर 'कम्पोजिड' गर्ने प्रयत्न भएको छ । जसअनुसार पारपाचुकेको चरमविन्दुमा पुगेको बेला सरोकार पक्षको तातो अनुभवमा देखिएको 'दाम्पत्य विचलनको कारण', 'अतिरिक्त सूचनाले देखाएका कारण' र 'विश्लेषणले देखाएका कारण' आदि ढाँचाहरूबाट कारणको खोजी गरी विश्लेषण गरिएको छ ।

दाम्पत्य विचलनको कारण : दाम्पत्य जीवनमा विभिन्न प्रकारका व्यक्तिगत, पारिवारिक र चारित्रिक कारणहरूबाट विचलन देखापरेको देखिन्छ । हरेक नमूना घटना एक अर्कोभन्दा भिन्न र मौलिक छन् । तर पनि ती घटनाको सृजनाको प्रकृति चरित्रहरूमा केही तालमेल देखिन्छ । तालमेलका आधारमा समग्र दाम्पत्य जीवनको विचलनका कारणलाई दुईवटा मूलभूत बुँदामा समेटिएको छ ।

(क) यौन जीवनमा विचलनको अवस्थाले

(ख) शारीरिक तथा मानसिक यातनापूर्ण व्यवहारले

उल्लेखित बुँदाहरूमा: सन्तान नभएको, सन्तुलित र विश्वासिलो सहवासमा रहन नसकेको र आफ्नो जोडी तथा परिवारबाट सहभावपूर्ण व्यवहारको अभाव भएका घटनाहरूका साथै लोग्नेले सौता ल्याएका कारणबाट पूर्व पत्तिको यौनिकतामा आँच पुगेको बताइएका घटनाहरूलाई 'यौन जीवनमा विचलनको अवस्था' मा समेटिएको छ । यस्तै गरी लोग्नेले नसालु पदार्थ खाएर कुटपीट गर्ने तथा नसेवाज नभएकाले पनि पत्नीलाई मानसिक रूपमा यातना पुग्ने व्यवहार गरेको अवस्थाबाट दाम्पत्य विचलनलाई प्रेरित गरेका घटनालाई 'यातनापूर्ण व्यवहार' मा समायोजन गरिएको छ ।

तालिका नं. ११ व्यक्तिगत वितरणको आधारमा दाम्पत्य विचलनको कारण

विवाह	यौन जीवनमा विचलन	यातनापूर्ण व्यवहार	कुल
मागी	१६ (६१.५%)	१० (३८.५%)	२६
प्रेम	१० (४५.५%)	१२ (५४.५%)	२२
जम्मा	२६ (५४%)	२२ (४६%)	४८

स्रोत: स्थलगत सर्वेक्षण, २०५६।

उल्लेखित घटनाहरूलाई विवाह अनुसार विचलनका कारणहरू समेत केलाउन प्रति तालिकीकरणमा हेर्दा (तालिका नं. ११) कुल घटनामा ५४% ले यौन जीवनमा विचलन आएको तथ्य देखाएका छन् भने ४६% ले यातनापूर्ण व्यवहारका कारणले हुन पुगेको तथ्य अगाडि सार्दछन्। यस्ता तथ्यहरू दुवै खाले विवाहमा पाइएका छन्। कुल मागी विवाहका ६१.५% र प्रेम विवाहका ४५.५% मा यौन जीवनको विचलन देखिएको छ भने यातनापूर्ण व्यवहारहरू विवाहगत रूपमा हेर्दा मागी विवाहका ३८.५% परेका छन् भने प्रेम विवाहका ५४.५% ले प्रतिनिधित्व गर्दछन्। उल्लेखित आँकडा तुलनात्मक रूपमा हेर्दा मागी विवाहमा 'यौन जीवनको विचलन' को आकार ठूलो देखिएको छ भने प्रेमविवाहमा 'यातनापूर्ण व्यवहार' को आकार ठूलो देखिएको छ। दाम्पत्य विचलनका प्रकृतिहरू सृजनामा यी दुवै घटनाहरू नै मूल रूपमा अगाडि देखिन्छन्।

तालिका नं. १२ विवाहमा सम्मति र दाम्पत्य विचलनको स्थिति

हार्दिक सम्मतिको स्थिति	यौन विचलन	यातना
हार्दिक सम्मतिको मात्रा भएको (३०%)	८ (३१%)	७ (२७%)
हार्दिक सम्मतिको मात्रा नभएको (७०%)	१८ (६९%)	१६ (७३%)

स्रोत: स्थलगत सर्वेक्षण, २०५६।

दाम्पत्य विचलनका कारणहरूमा विवाह गर्दा हार्दिक सम्मति भए नभएको अवस्थाले पनि प्रभाव पारेको तथ्य देखा परेको छ। तालिका नं. १२ मा विवाहमा हार्दिक सम्मतिका आधारमा दाम्पत्य विचलनको कारण केलाउँदा हार्दिक सम्मति नभएका विवाहहरूमा यौन विचलन र यातनाको दर बढी नै देखिएको छ। हार्दिक सम्मतिको अभावमा विवाह भएका (करीब ७०%) जोडीहरूमा नै यौन विचलन र यातनाको अवस्थामा क्रमशः ६९% र ७३% प्रतिनिधित्व गर्दछन्, जबकी हार्दिक सम्मति भएका (३०%) जोडीहरूले क्रमशः यौन विचलनमा ३१% र यातनामा २७% मात्र आकार ओगटेका छन्। अधिक मात्रामा हार्दिक सम्मतिको अभावमा विवाह भएका जोडीहरू हुन् र तिनीहरूकै दाम्पत्य विचलनका

कारणहरू उच्च दरमा प्रभावित भएको तथ्यले विहेपूर्वको जोडी चयनको प्रक्रियाले दाम्पत्य जीवनको सन्तुष्टिमा पनि प्रभाव पार्दोरहेछ भन्ने प्रमाण देखाएको छ ।

अतिरिक्त सूचनाले देखाएको कारण : पारपाचुकेका कारणहरूलाई अवलोकन गर्दा विवाहको तयारीका क्रमबाटै रोपिएको दुर्घटनाको सम्भावना पनि समेटनुका साथै दाम्पत्यका विभिन्न पक्षहरूमा उनीहरूको सहभागिता र अन्तरक्रियात्मक व्यवहारको मात्रालाई समेटिनु आवश्यक हुन्छ । अध्ययनको क्रममा अतिरिक्त सूचनाले देखाएका तथ्यहरूलाई पाँच वटा समूहमा उत्तरदाताको सम्मतिको मात्राको आधारमा तालिका नं. १३ मा तालिकीकरण गरिएको छ ।

तालिका नं. १३ अतिरिक्त सूचनाले देखाएका कारण र प्रभावित जोडिगत आँकडा #

कारण	प्रभावित जोडी	प्रतिशत
परिपक्वताको अभाव	१५	६२%
पारदर्शिताको अभाव	१७	७१%
सन्तानको अभाव	१३	५४.२%
यौन सन्तुलनको अभाव	१९	७९%
परिवारको यातनापूर्ण व्यवहार	१७	७१%

स्रोत: स्थलगत सर्वेक्षण, २०५६ ।

#नोट: यस तालिकामा एउटा जोडीले एकभन्दा बढी कारणबाट आफु प्रभावित भएको देखाएको छ । उल्लेखित तालिकामा पाँचवटा कारणबाट प्रभावित भएका जोडीलाई देखाइएको छ । यहाँ कुन कारणबाट बढी जोडी प्रभावित भएको महसूस गरेका छन् भन्ने तथ्य देखाउन खोजिएको छ ।

उल्लेखित आँकडाले देखाए अनुसार दाम्पत्य दुर्घटनाका सम्भावित पक्षहरू केही विवाह पूर्वको त्रुटीका कारण विवाहसँगै रोपिएका छन् भने केही विवाहपछिको असन्तुलित र असम्मानित दाम्पत्यताबाट सृजना भएको पाइन्छ । तालिका नं. १३ ले देखाएको आँकडा अनुसार पारपाचुके भएका जोडीहरूमा ६२% को परिपक्वताको अभावको मात्रा छ भने त्यो भन्दा बढी ७१% जोडीहरूमा एकअर्कामा पारदर्शी पहिचानको अभाव थियो । यस्तो अपरिपक्व र अपारदर्शी व्यवहारको शिकार भएका जोडीहरूमा स्वस्थ पहिचानको अभाव भएकोले लिइएको वैवाहिक निर्णयमा कौटुम्बिकताका सबै पक्षको उत्तिकै सन्तुलित सम्मति भएको कुरा नकारेको देखिन्छ । यस्तै गरी ५४% जोडीहरूमा सन्तानको अभावले यौनिक सन्तुलनमा गडबडी ल्याएको छ भने ७९% जोडीहरूमा प्रष्ट रूपमा यौन सन्तुलन र समर्पणको अभाव देखिएको छ । परिवारमा यातनापूर्ण परिस्थिति भोग्नु परेको घटनाहरू पनि

७१% जोडीमा देखिएको छ । यसरी पारपाचुकेमा कुनै एउटा कारणले मात्र समस्या हुने नभई धेरै खाले समस्याले दाम्पत्य दुर्घटना पार्ने प्रभावी भूमिका खेल्ने गरेको देखिन्छ ।

विश्लेषणले देखाएका कारण : कारणहरूको सत्य-तथ्यतालाई पहिचान गर्न प्रारम्भिक रूपमा देखिएका कारण तथा अतिरिक्त रूपमा देखिएका कारणहरूलाई खोजको केन्द्रीय उद्देश्य अनुरूप तालमेल मिलाउने र समग्रताको विश्लेषणबाट ठोस कारण पत्ता लगाउने कोशिस यस बुँदामा गरिएको छ । यहाँ अधिल्ला बुँदाहरूमा उल्लेख गरिएका कारणहरूलाई नै आधारमा राखेर विश्लेषण गरिएको छ ।

पारपाचुकेसम्बन्धी यस अध्ययनका तथ्यहरूलाई विश्लेषणात्मक ढाँचामा केलाउँदा चार प्रकारका कारणहरू प्रखर रूपमा देखिएका छन् । यसलाई निम्नानुसार उल्लेख गर्न सकिन्छ:

तालिका नं. १४ पारपाचुकेका विश्लेषणात्मक कारणहरू र प्रभावित जोडीहरूको वितरण

कारणहरू	प्रभावित जोडी	प्रतिशतमा
स्वस्थ पहिचान र हार्दिक सम्मतिको अभावमा विवाह हुनु	२१	८७.५%
दाम्पत्य जीवनमा सह-अस्तित्वपूर्ण मर्यादाको अभाव हुनु	२२	९२.०%
भिन्न सामाजिककरणको जोडीमा विहे गरिनु	९	३७.५%
सन्तुलित यौनिकताको अभाव हुनु	२२	९२.०%

स्रोत: स्थलगत सर्वेक्षण, २०५६ ।

उल्लेखित कारणहरूमा प्रभावित घटनाहरूका आँकडालाई केलाउँदा (तालिका नं. १४) स्वस्थ पहिचान र हार्दिक सम्मतिको अभावमा विवाहित भएकाले ८७.५% घटनाहरू प्रभावित छन् भने दाम्पत्य जीवनमा सह-अस्तित्वपूर्ण मर्यादाको अभावमा दाम्पत्य विखण्डन भएका ९२% घटनाहरू देखिएका छन् । त्यसैगरी विश्लेषणमा एउटा नयाँ तथ्य भिन्न जीवनशैलीका जोडीहरूको बीच आपसी तालमेल नदेखिएकोले दाम्पत्य जीवनमा सन्तुलन ल्याउन कठिन देखिएको घटनामा करिब ३७.५% जोडीहरू प्रभावित भएका छन् । भिन्न सामाजिक धरातलमा हुर्केका र भिन्नखाले जीवन शैली बनाएका जोडी बीच विवाहपूर्व स्वस्थ-पारदर्शी पहिचान हुन नपाईकुनै स्वीकार गरिएको वैवाहिकतामा व्यावहारिक शैलीहरू भिन्न भएकोले एकले अर्कोसँगको दाम्पत्य जीवनमा मानसिक कठिनाई र एक अर्काप्रति घृणाको भावना श्रुजित भएको देखिएको छ, जसले परन्तुमा दाम्पत्य सन्तुलनमा विचलन बढाउन प्रेरित गरेको छ । यो बुँदा आफैमा दाम्पत्य विचलनको प्रमुख कारण हुनुभन्दा अरू कारणहरूलाई सक्रिय बनाउन टेवा दिने र कौटुम्बिकीयका आँगिक तत्वहरूको आपसी अन्तरक्रियात्मक सम्बन्धमा खलल पार्ने धमिरालाई प्रशस्त सहयोग पुऱ्याउँन सक्य देखिन्छ । दाम्पत्य प्रति समर्पण र उर्जाशील एकतामा खलल पुऱ्याउन यसले एउटा विकृत र विक्षिप्त दृष्टिकोणको सृजना गरिराउँदछ । यसै क्रममा दाम्पत्य जीवनमा सन्तुलित यौनिकताको

अभावको स्थितिबाट पारपाचुके तर्फ ९२% घटनाहरू प्रभावित भएका छन् । यौनिकता भन्नाले बृहत्तर सन्तुलित यौन जीवनलाई समेट्न खोजिएको छ, संकीर्ण कामुकतालाई मात्र होइन । दम्पतीहरू बीच सहिष्णु यौनजीवन नहुनु, एक अर्काको यौनिकता प्रति विश्वासिलो नहुनु वा समर्पित र सन्तुष्ट हुन नसक्नु तथा नारीहरूले मातृत्वको भूमिका नपाउनु र एक अर्काको व्यवहार र अन्तरक्रियात्मक दृष्टिकोणले एक अर्काप्रति आकर्षण र महत्त्वको सम्भावना न्यून हुँदै क्षीण हुन पुग्नु यौनिकतामा विचलन सृजना गर्ने तत्वहरू देखिएका छन् । अधिकतर दम्पतीहरूको यौनिकतालाई उनीहरूको दाम्पत्य वातावरणले बाह्य रूपमा प्रत्यक्ष प्रभाव पारेको देखिन्छ । पुरुषहरूले महिलाहरूको यौनिकताको सम्मान गर्न नसकेको, पतिहरूद्वारा नै पत्नीहरूको मानसिक समर्पण र श्रद्धा गुमेको अवस्था सृजना भएको तथ्य एकातिर छ भने व्यभिचारपूर्ण यौनिकताबाट विक्षिप्त जीवन यापन गर्नुभन्दा वैकल्पिक मुक्तिको बाटो खोज्दै पारपाचुके गर्न पुगेका तथ्य पनि यस भित्र समेटिएका छन् । आफ्नो जोडीले परव्यक्तिसँग यौन सम्बन्ध राखेको सूचना र तथ्यले गर्दा कतिपय महिलाले लोग्ने प्रति अविश्वास गर्ने अवस्था जन्मेको छ भने महिलाले परपुरुषसँग यौन सम्बन्ध राखेको तथ्यले पुरुषले सो पत्नीलाई आफ्नो दाम्पत्यबाट मुक्त गर्न सामाजिक-मनोवैज्ञानिक दवाव पर्ने कारणबाट हुने पारपाचुके पनि यही सन्तुलित यौनिकताको बुँदामा समेटिएको छ । अध्ययनमा यो पनि एक प्रमुख तत्वको रूपमा देखा परेको छ ।

तागाधारीहरूको समय पारपाचुकेका सम्बन्धमा गरिएको अध्ययनबाट दुईवटा सैद्धान्तिक र व्यवहारिक निष्कर्षमा पुगिएको छ ।

(क) सैद्धान्तिक निष्कर्ष

त्रुटिपूर्ण चरित्रबाट कौटुम्बिकताको निर्माण गरिनु र निर्मित कौटुम्बिकताका आगिक तत्वहरूमा कार्यात्मक एकताको अभाव भईरहनु नै विवाह-विच्छेदको मूल सैद्धान्तिक कारण हो । विवाह-विच्छेदले दाम्पत्य व्यवस्थाको विघटन सँगै कौटुम्बिकता समेत विघटन गर्दछ र यसले तत्कालीन कौटुम्बिक सम्बन्धको जालोका सबै पक्षमा प्रत्यक्ष प्रभाव पार्दछ ।

(ख) व्यावहारिक निष्कर्ष

विवाह-विच्छेदका कारणहरूलाई विभिन्न ढाँचा र प्रक्रियामा विश्लेषण गरी केलाउँदा एउटा मात्र कारणले पारपाचुके हुने गरेको नभई चारवटा तत्वहरू (Four factors) को प्रक्रियागत कारणले यो घटना सृजना हुने गरेको देखिएको छ । अवधारणागत खाकामा उल्लेख गरेकै पारपाचुकेको बीज विवाहसँगै रोपिएको हुन्छ र केही समयको अन्तरालमा बीजले अस्तित्व देखाई स्वाभाविक रूपमा पारपाचुके जन्मिन्छ । जस अनुसार— 'स्वस्थ पहिचान र हार्दिक सम्मतिको अभावमा विवाह हुनु तथा दाम्पत्य व्यवस्थामा सह-अस्तित्वपूर्ण मर्यादा र सन्तुलित यौनिकताको अभाव रहनु' नै विवाह विच्छेदको मूल व्यवहारिक कारण हो ।

उल्लेखित चार तत्वहरूमा विवाह सृजनाका दुई तत्व र विवाहपछिका दाम्पत्य अन्तरक्रियाका दुई तत्वहरू बीच पारस्परिक अन्तर्सम्बन्ध छ र यिनीहरूले नै विवाह सम्बन्धमा उर्जाशील प्राण संचार गराउन साधनको भूमिका निर्वाह गर्दछन् । यी सबै पक्षको सन्तुलित र सम्मानित अवस्था रहेसम्म वैवाहिक सम्बन्ध टिकीरहन्छ, अन्यथा जुनसुकै बेला पनि त्यो सम्बन्ध समाप्त हुन सक्छ । वैवाहिक सम्बन्ध समाप्त भएपछि पूर्व जोडी र उनका सन्तानहरूलाई उचित संरक्षण र नयाँ क्रियाशीलता दिन आजको सामाजिक व्यवस्था सक्षम भै नसकेकोले संरक्षण र सन्तुलित क्रियाशीलताको अभावका कारण सम्बद्ध व्यक्तिको असामान्य स्थितिको शिकार भईरहेका छन् । यसको अरु असर कौटुम्बिकताका अन्य सम्बद्ध पक्षहरूमा पनि अधिकांशतः हानिकारक नै देखिएको छ ।

बालबच्चा विहीन पारपाचुके भन्दा बालबच्चा सहितको पारपाचुके बढी असरकारी देखिएको छ । दम्पतीको वेमेल र विच्छेदपूर्ण परिस्थितिमा हुर्केका सन्तानहरू कानूनतः बाबुको संरक्षणमा रहने प्रचलन छ, आमाको संरक्षणमा रहेका सन्तानहरू भन्दा बाबुको संरक्षणमा रहेका र आमासँग सम्पर्क र सम्वादको अवसर नपाएका बालबालिकाहरू बढी असामान्य र विक्षिप्त मनोदशामा सामाजीकृत भईरहेका छन् । पारपाचुकी पुरुषभन्दा महिलालाई सामाजिक असहयोग बढी छ र उनीहरूका सन्तानमा पुत्रलाई भन्दा पुत्रीहरूमाथि सामाजिक शोषण बढी छ । पारपाचुके गर्ने व्यक्तिले तत्कालका लागि राहत महशूस गरे पनि नयाँ वैकल्पिक पारिवारिकता अपेक्षित रूपमा सन्तुलित छैन । कालान्तरमा पुरुषहरू नै बढी मात्रामा मानसिक पीडा र असामान्य स्थितिका शिकार भईरहेका देखिएका छन् । परिवारका यी विचलनमुखी विवाह र जीवन शैलीले सामाजिक व्यवस्थामा मानवीय एकता कमजोर भएकोछ, जसको परिणतिले समाजमा अर्को विभाजनमुखी प्रवृत्ति र असन्तुलन बढाउने सम्भावना छ । मानवीय विकासको प्रारम्भिक संस्था 'परिवार' निर्माणको परम्परागत प्रक्रिया 'विवाह'को मर्यादा र प्रभावकारितामाथि विसंगत सामाजिक कार्यशैलीका कारण विश्वास र श्रद्धा घट्न थालेको छ ।

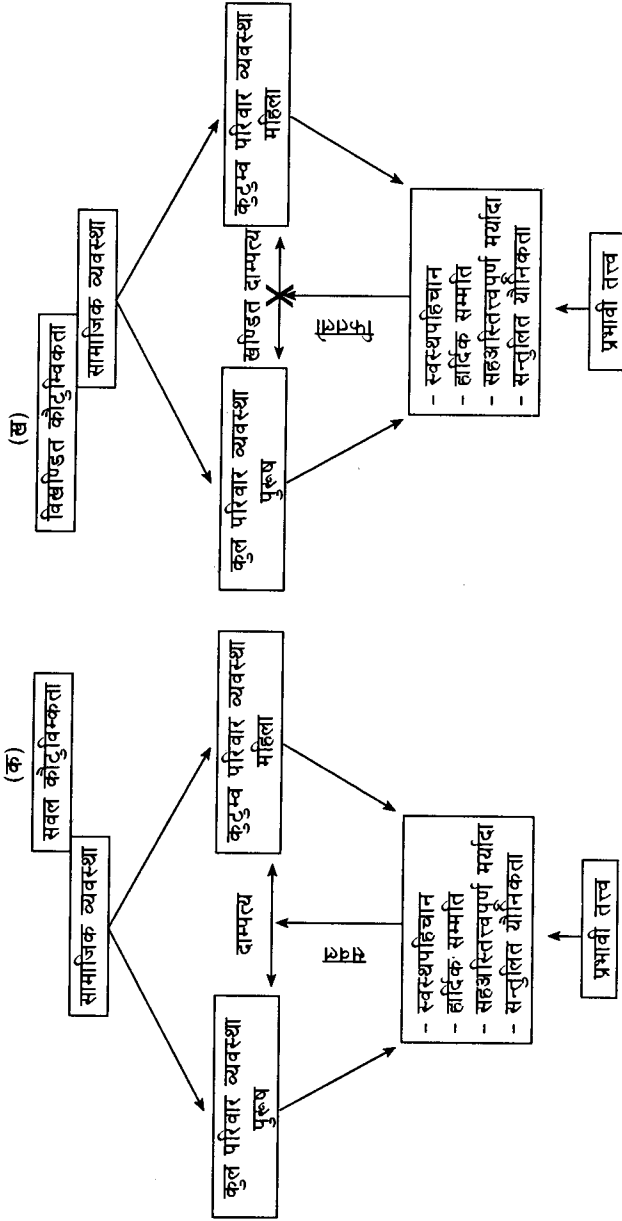
सैद्धान्तिक प्रस्तावना : उल्लेखित निष्कर्षका आधारमा वैवाहिक सन्तुलनका बारेमा अनुमान लगाउन र विश्लेषण गर्न एउटा सैद्धान्तिक दृष्टिकोण (Theoretical vision) तल प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ ।

- एकाई १: पारपाचुके जोडी बीच विवाहका क्रममा 'स्वस्थ पहिचानको अभाव' थियो ।
 एकाई २: पारपाचुके जोडी बीच विवाहका क्रममा 'हार्दिक सम्मति' को अभाव थियो ।
 एकाई ३: पारपाचुके जोडीको दाम्पत्य जीवनमा 'सह-अस्तित्वपूर्ण मर्यादा' को अभाव थियो ।
 एकाई ४: पारपाचुके जोडीको दाम्पत्य जीवनमा 'सन्तुलित यौनिकता' को अभाव थियो ।
 निष्कर्ष १: पारपाचुके जोडीको विवाहका क्रममा 'स्वस्थ पहिचान' र 'हार्दिक सम्मति' तथा दाम्पत्य जीवनमा 'सह-अस्तित्वपूर्ण मर्यादा' र 'सन्तुलित यौनिकता' को अभाव थियो ।

- निष्कर्ष २: विवाहका क्रममा 'स्वस्थ पहिचान' र 'हार्दिक सम्मति' तथा दाम्पत्य जीवनमा 'सह-अस्तित्वपूर्ण मर्यादा' र 'सन्तुलित यौनिकता' को अभावले नै दम्पतीमा पारपाचुकेको अवस्था आएको थियो ।
- निष्कर्ष ३: विवाहका क्रममा 'स्वस्थ पहिचान' र 'हार्दिक सम्मति' तथा दाम्पत्य जीवनमा सह-अस्तित्वपूर्ण मर्यादा' र 'सन्तुलित यौनिकता' को अभाव नै विवाह विच्छेदको मूल कारण हो ।
- प्रक्षेपण १: विवाहका क्रममा 'स्वस्थ पहिचान' र 'हार्दिक सम्मति' तथा दाम्पत्य जीवनमा 'सह-अस्तित्वपूर्ण मर्यादा' र 'सन्तुलित यौनिकता' को अभाव भएका विवाहमा पारपाचुकेको सम्भावना बढी हुन्छ ।
- प्रक्षेपण २: 'स्वस्थ पहिचान र हार्दिक सम्मति, सह-अस्तित्वपूर्ण मर्यादा, सन्तुलित यौनिकता' र पारपाचुकेका बीचमा विपरीत सम्बन्ध छ । विवाहमा स्वस्थ पहिचान, हार्दिक सम्मति, सह-अस्तित्वपूर्ण मर्यादा र सन्तुलित यौनिकताको अनुपात बढेमा पारपाचुकेको मात्रा घट्न थाल्छ र ती तत्वहरूको मात्रा घटेमा पारपाचुकेको मात्रा बढ्न सक्छ ।
- प्रक्षेपण ३: विवाहका क्रममा स्वस्थ पहिचान र हार्दिक सम्मति तथा दाम्पत्य जीवनमा सह-अस्तित्वपूर्ण मर्यादा र सन्तुलित यौनिकता हुर्कन सक्ने कौटुम्बिकताको निर्माण भएमा दाम्पत्य जीवन सफल र उर्जाशील बन्न सक्छ, अन्यथा रुग्ण पारिवारिकतामा रूपान्तरिक भई दाम्पत्य जीवन असन्तुलित हुन पुग्छ ।
- पुष्टी : विवाहमा स्वस्थ पहिचान, हार्दिक सम्मति, सह-अस्तित्वपूर्ण मर्यादा र सन्तुलित यौनिकताले स्वस्थ र सवल कौटुम्बिकताको निर्माण गर्न मद्दत पुऱ्याउँदछ । स्वस्थ र सवल कौटुम्बिकताले दाम्पत्य सम्बन्धलाई उर्जाशील बनाउँछ र विचलन हुनबाट जोगाउँछ । यी आधारभूत तत्वहरूको अभाव र असन्तुलनले कौटुम्बिकीलाई असन्तुलित र कमजोर बनाउँछ, जसको परिणामस्वरूप दाम्पत्य विचलन वा पारपाचुके अवस्था जन्मन सक्छ । यी चारवटा आधारभूत मौलिक पक्ष (Four fundamental factors); 'स्वस्थ पहिचान, हार्दिक सम्मति, सह-अस्तित्वपूर्ण मर्यादा र सन्तुलित यौनिकता तथा कौटुम्बिकताका बीच पारस्परिक सकारात्मक सम्बन्ध छ । आधारभूत मौलिक तत्वहरू सवल भएमा कौटुम्बिकता पनि सवल रहन्छ, अन्यथा विलोम हुनसक्छ ।

प्रस्तावित विवाहविच्छेदको सिद्धान्तलाई चित्रमय रूपमा पनि यस प्रकार देखाउन सकिन्छ :-

चित्र नं. १ वैवाहिकता टिकाउने र टुटाउने प्रभावी तत्व र अन्तरक्यात्मक सम्बन्धको चित्र



चित्र नं १ मा (क) खण्डले कुलपरिवार व्यवस्थाको पुरुष र कुटुम्ब परिवार व्यवस्थाको महिला बीचमा भएको दाम्पत्यसम्बन्धमा दम्पतिहरूको आपसी अन्तरकृयात्मकसम्बन्ध र कुल कुटुम्ब पक्षले दम्पति प्रति देखाउने अन्तरकृयात्मक व्यवहारमा 'प्रभावी तत्व' सबल रहेको अवस्थामा त्यो दाम्पत्य लगायत समग्र कौटुम्बिक सम्बन्धका पक्षहरूमा उर्जाशील एकता देखिएको छ । त्यस्तैगरि चित्र २ खण्ड (ख) ले ठीक विपरीत फितलो अन्तरकृयात्मक सम्बन्ध रहेको देखाएको छ । दाम्पत्य सम्बन्ध भित्रका आपसी अन्तरकृयात्मक सम्बन्ध र कुल कुटुम्बपक्षले केन्द्रित दाम्पत्य सम्बन्धप्रति देखाउने अन्तरकृयात्मक व्यवहारमा 'प्रभावी तत्व' हरूको फितलो उपस्थितिले दाम्पत्य सम्बन्ध खण्डित भएको मात्र नभई त्यो कौटुम्बिक सम्बन्धको जालो कमजोर र निश्प्रभावी रहेको देखाएको छ ।

यो समग्र अध्ययनले दाम्पत्य सम्बन्धका प्रत्यक्ष तत्व लोग्ने-स्वास्ती बीचको अन्तरकृयात्मक व्यवहार र उनीहरूका सम्बन्धमा कुल-कुटुम्ब पक्षको अन्तरकृयात्मक व्यवहारको अन्तरसम्बन्धमा 'स्वस्थ पहिचान, हार्दिक सम्मति, सहअस्तित्वपूर्ण मर्यादा र सन्तुलित यौनिकता' सबल रूपमा कृयाशील भएमा दाम्पत्य सम्बन्ध लगायत समग्र कौटुम्बिकताको अस्तित्व जीवन्त रहन्छ । यदि आपसी दाम्पत्य सम्बन्धमा र उनीहरूप्रति कुल-कुटुम्ब पक्षको अन्तरकृयात्मक व्यवहारहरूमा चार मौलिक प्रभावी तत्व को कृयाशीलता स्वस्थ र सबल नभएमा त्यो दाम्पत्य सम्बन्ध लगायत कौटुम्बिक सम्बन्धको जालो समेत विखण्डित वा सो सरह कमजोर रहन सक्छ । यही नै यस अध्ययनको गुरु सन्देश हो ।

पाद टिप्पणी

- १ उनीहरू आफूलाई सार्वजनिक रूपमा चिनाउनु पर्दा पारपाचुकी भएको कुरा बताउन चाहँदैनन् । कसैले प्रसंगवस कोट्याएमा सकेसम्म वास्तविकता लुकाउने प्रयत्न गर्दछन् ।
- २ किनकि परिवार नै मानवको प्रारम्भिक संगठन थियो र व्यक्तिका सबै शक्ति परिवारमा निहित थिए भन्ने विश्वास गरिन्छ ।
- ३ यो हरेक प्राणीमा हुने प्रवृत्ति हो भन्ने मत "सोसियो-बायोलोजी थ्योरी" ले राख्दछ ।
- ४ यसै मान्यताको उदाहरणमा स्त्रीको अनुपस्थितिमा पुरुष अपूर्ण हुने भएकोले रामले सीतालाई अश्वमेध यज्ञको बेला उनको उपस्थिति जनाउन सीताको प्रतिमा आफूसँगै राखेको प्रसंग रामायणमा पाइन्छ ।
- ५ यसको विश्लेषण गर्दा स्त्रीहरू बहु विवाहका लागि स्वीकार्य हुन् र प्रथम तीन विवाह देवताहरूसँग गरीसकेपछि चौथो पतिको रूपमा मनुष्य पुत्रसँग संस्कार गरिएको हो कि भन्ने अर्थ लाग्दछ । विवाह मण्डपमा तीनपटक सम्म अग्नि प्रदक्षिणा गर्दा कन्याले बरलाई औंलाले तानेर अगुवाई गर्ने कर्मले कन्या सोम, गन्धर्व र अग्निनसँग निवृत्त भएर चौथो पतिको रूपमा मनुष्यलाई वरण गरेको प्रष्ट हुन्छ । यो कुरा 'विवाह पद्धति' पुस्तकमा पनि पाइन्छ । 'सोम : प्रथमो, गन्धर्वो द्वितीय उत्तर : तृतीयो ऽ अग्निष्टे पतिस्तुरीयस्ते मनुष्यजा ॥ सोमोद्गन्धर्वाय गन्धर्वो ददग्नये । रपिं च पुत्राश्चादा

दग्निर्महयमयो इमाम' ॥ स्रोत : विवाह पद्धतौ - होमराम्भ श्लोक २/३ जयनेपाल प्रकाशन, वाराणशी ।

- ६ यतिबेला प्राकृतिक जीवन पद्धति भएको र आचरणमय जीवनका लागि कसैलाईपनि हिंसा वा विभेद गर्नु पाप सरह हुने विश्वास गरिन्थ्यो । स्त्रीहरु पति मरेमा सति जानु पर्ने थिएन र विद्या तथा धन र शक्तिमा सरस्वती, लक्ष्मी र दुर्गा लगायतका स्त्री जातिको पनि सम्मान गरिन्थ्यो, स्त्री र पुरुषलाई अर्ध नारीश्वरको रूपमा हेरिन्थ्यो भन्ने विश्वास आजपनि तागाधारी समाजमा प्रचलित छ ।
- ७ पाराशर स्मृति ४।३० पेज ३४ । ("नष्टे मृते प्रव्रजिते क्लीवे च पतिते पतौ । पंचास्वपत्सु नारीणां पतिरन्यो विधीयते ॥ ३० ॥
- ८ रामायणमा रामचन्द्र बनबास जाँदा पञ्चवटी वनमा सीताको खोजीमा भौतारिएर छटपटिएको बेला सतीले सीताको रूप धारण गरी पुरुषको पत्नि प्रेमलाई परीक्षण गर्न गएको प्रकरणले सीताको रूप धारण गरेकी सतीलाई महादेवद्वारा 'सीता मेरी आमा जस्ती हुन, उनको स्वरूप धारण गर्नेलाई मैले संभोग गर्न मिल्दैन, त्यसैले मबाट लोग्नेको सम्बन्ध बहाल गर्न सकिँदैन' भनेर सतीसँग दम्पतिको सम्बन्ध क्रियाशील नगराएको हुँदा सतीदेवी लज्जित भएर आफ्नो त्यो देह त्याग गरी अर्को जन्म लिने मौकाको खोजीमा रहेको बेला आफ्ना पिता दक्षको यज्ञमा कथित अपमानको कारण देखाएर आत्महत्या गरेको प्रसंग श्रीमददेवी भागवतमा उल्लेख गरिएको पाइन्छ ।

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BOOK REVIEW

Hardman, Charlotte E. 2000. *Other Worlds: Notions of Self and Emotion among the Lhorung Rai*. Oxford: Berg. Maps, figures, glossary, appendices, bibliography and index. pp. 315.

There is quite a good number of anthropological monographs and dissertations on various groups of Rai in Nepal: Nick Allen on Thulung Rai, S. Toba on Khaling Rai, C. McDougal on Kulung Rai, M. Gaenszle on Mewahang Rai and Dilli Dahal on Athpahariya Rai. The present book under review is another volume on the Lhorung Rai. Considering the diversity in the Rai languages and cultures (there are well over 20 groups within Rai with different languages and culture) we need more publications on the Rai so that it is easy to assess the nature of the Rai people and similarities and differences in their language, history and culture, particularly the myths, rites and traditions.

Other Worlds is a big book containing nine chapters. In a nutshell, attempts to explore the other world view of the Lhorung Rai, by examining their concepts and discourse on self and emotion of the Lhorung as an individual. In other words, the book provides an indigenous concept of a person or self in the local context. In her own words, "The book is concerned with how notions of self, person, which have some biological basis, are also constructed by peoples' cultural understandings, the concepts, premises and discourse of the group they identify with, such as the underlying assumptions of the nature and how they relate to the social world" (p. 12). In Thulung culture (I think this is more universal in all oriental cultures, and this is true for all ethnic/ caste groups in Nepal), every person must retain the correct bond with his or her ancestors. In the context of Lhorung, it is with "sammang" (or ancestors) – a bond, which is internally represented by saya (the ancestral spirit with a person) – otherwise the person, is vulnerable in his everyday life (p. 15). In brief, the book attempts to explain, "How Lhorung experiences are culturally constructed?" (p.16). The culture and personality

theory is glossed with “ethno-psychological approach” in explaining the behaviour of everyday life of Lhorung people through the participant’s point of view.

In Chapter I “Theories in my Boots” she admits that she reached the village “with a myriad of unanswered thoughts and a baggage of possibly useless anthropological theory weighing down to her walking boots”(p.4). As usual, like many young anthropologists she was overloaded by her own theories and preconceptions while landing in the field sites with uncertainties what she would do, where she would stay, etc. But while looking at Lhorung Rai settlements in the Arun valley with their house structures and rituals, she gained confidence in herself that Lhorung Rai culture could be explained grasping their notions of *sammang* (ancestors) and *saya* (the ancestral spirit with a person).

Chapter II is on “Pangma People”, where she describes the landscape of the Arun valley vis-à-vis the Lhorung villages, households, peoples and settlements. She notes how she stayed in Gairi Pangma, the old Lhorung Rai settlement with more than 194 households. This chapter also deals with her methodological approach as she describes in detail how she was accepted by the community and vice versa, her initial mistakes in the field, and how Kahili, the wife of the fourth son, became a most patient teacher and interpreter for her in the field (p. 21). Lhorung women accepted her as a woman with male freedom (p.25). But she did not forget to include male informants to rely on many rituals, the core text for explaining self and emotion. Rai women are distinct from others because of their dress and jewelry but men are differentiated only because of their physical appearance. She describes the clan structure, as she believes that this is one of important ways to relate the notion of self and identity of a person in a particular locale and culture (p.35). Lhorung, Yamphu and Mewahang Rai are considered one’s own group or blood brothers (p. 36).

In Chapter III “Ancestors are Angry”, she meticulously discusses the Thulung Rai’s ancestors in relation to their day-to-day lives. Sickness of a person is closely associated with Sammang or ancestors and the local healer or Yatangpa will easily diagnose the causes of sickness. No doubt, super-human beings are closely associated with pain or illness experienced by Lhorung (p. 44). She discusses how a man or woman becomes *yatangpa* (male), *mangpa* (male) and *mangmani* (female).

The Chapter IV “Super Human World and Knowledge of Illness” is one of the biggest chapters of the book where she deals with complex pantheons

prevalent in the Lhorung culture: i) *sammang* (ancestors spirits) with varieties – *pappamamma'chi* (the guardian or grandparents spirits), *chawatangma*, with more than twenty names (the creative old woman of the forest), Khimpie and *lataba* (house ancestors – woman of the snakes, Lord of the Monkeys), and *Waye warema* (brother and seven sisters), ii) *Chap* (ghosts of the dead or spirit of ancestors). A dead person becomes *chap* because of unnatural or premature deaths such as from childbirth, falling from a cliff and so on (p.91). The *chaps* are called to visit the living at funerals and at *nuagi*, the ceremony while renewing the household shrine (p.90). If *sammangs* are offered uncooked meat or blood, *chaps* are given only cooked meat or raw fruits and vegetables (p.90). *Chaps* could also bring a number of different kinds of sicknesses if not properly propitiated, and iii) *khammang* and *yimi* (the husband and wife spirits or brother and sister as couple or the first incestuous couple as spirits). Because of inbuilt constraints within their culture, Hardman further suggests that Thulung Rai people were marrying with their close relatives throughout past, and this is so even today. Relating with their myths she has even narrated how brothers and sisters developed incestuous relationship (pp. 94-96) and established themselves as deities. This mythical story is not very different as described by David Holmberg (*Order in Paradox*, 1996) how one of the Tamang original clans emerged from the union of one's own blood brother and sister.

In Chapter V "Knowledge of the Past for the Present" she discusses *Pe-lam* or *mundhum*, the oral text among the Lhorung, which narrates knowledge about the ancestral past and the ways of maintaining it in the present (p.103). It is the oral tradition of the Lhorung customs, habits, traditions, rituals and myths (p.104), or the traditions of people as a whole. Rituals remain central in Lhorung lives and these *Pe-lam* (texts) are recalled by ritual specialists, which is itself a history of their own identity (p.109). *Pe-lam* for Lhorung is one of the important ways of coping with the modern world (p.113). *Pe-lam* spells out the relationship between man and nature (p.113) and narrates creation story that how they (or human beings) are related or interdependent with nature. The text provides narration of the ancestral mother of Lhorung (the picture of the father is blurred), who gave birth to many human and non-human species such as the thorny crippler (*chiching*), bamboo (*baphu*), the tiny black fly (*busunna*), bear (*maska*), monkey (*pubbang*), tiger (*kiba*), and man (*pomnohang*) or the Kiranti, and all of them are considered brothers to one another (p.114). Within humans, the brothers of Lhorung also include Khambu living to the west of the Arun, all

the Yakthumba(Limbu), all the Yakha as well as the Mech, Koch of the Tarai and the Lhorunge of the Tibetan speaking Lhomi of upper Arun living in Symadang village (p.116). They separated themselves from each other because of three main components involved in breaking the bones of a clan, such as an incestuous union, separation and the ideal of sharing (p.117).

Apart from *saya*, *chawa* and *samek* are two other concepts essential to the Lhorung notion of a person. *Samek* is the original proto-name, which identifies people, clans and objects in their relations with the person. *Chawa* is both the first clan watering place and the territorial name, which identifies and binds together a clan. They link the person through the identification of a clan to a particular area or territory (p.121).

In Chapter VI "Lhorung Houses: Saya and Nuagi," Hardman notes that ancestral identity can reveal itself in any place, person, object possessing *saya*, or *saya* can be seen as an institution in the Lhorung society (p. 137). For Lhorung, each object in the house that has *saya* is valued as super humans and are said to rest in those places that they recognize as belonging to them. So the different sections of the house, such as the hearth, the doorways, the beams and pillars are always regarded with respect (141). *Saya* is the form of ancestral deity or identity, which resides everywhere; it can reveal it at any place, in person and object (p.137).

The *nuagi* ceremonies are held annually by every Lhorung household and takes place inside the house. The household shrine and household – ancestors (*khammang* and *yimi*) are renewed at *nuagi* (p. 140). In *nuagi*, super-humans lived along side of the living in the society (p.146). *Nuagi* is big ceremony among the Thulung where they invite everybody to attend and enjoy the good food, etc. "All Lhorung know that their household gains status if lots of adults and children attend the household *nuagi*" (p.148). A big *nuagi* signifies a healthy and wealthy house (p.148). Hardman even compares *nuagi* of Thulung with that of the potlatch system of the Kwakiutal Indians(p 148). Likewise, *nuagi* is the most important ceremony or ritual in which the house and every member of the family revitalize new energy. The main purpose of *nuagi* is to raise *saya* of the household members, strengthen *lawā* (the soul) and clear *niwa* (acquired understanding)in the ritual chant (p.147). In terms of personhood, it points to the essential nature of relations with living and dead kin (p.150). In brief, "to enter a Lhorung house is to enter Lhorung metaphysics"(p.169).

Chapter VII is "The Person and the Cycle of Life", where she describes the life cycle rituals of Lhorung: birth, marriage and death. Growth and

development of the child is discussed in the context of *niwa* (acquired understanding, capacity of an individual about judgment and feelings or mind of the person or mental attitudes) and *lawa* (the soul) that can leave the child's body and wander around) (p.187). The interesting conclusion is that "when *niwa* hurts, *saya* falls; if *niwa* is not strong and big, *lawa* leaves" (p.211). Though given freedom to both the boy and girl to select their spouse, two-thirds of Lhorung marriages are arranged. The one-third marriages, which are performed through elopement or by theft, parental discretion is taken special consideration or sometimes parents force their daughter to marry a particular boy though a girl may not like the boy initially (pp. 204-210). In almost all types of marriages, the boy has the advantage of marrying the girl. In other words, the superiority of male is taken for granted even in the ethnic/tribal culture such as Lhorung. Death ritual as a whole is discussed briefly though it reflects the core values sacred to the society.

Chapter VIII "Emotions and Concepts of Mind: Understanding Lhorung Behaviour and Social Institutions" deals with emotion terms within specific contexts and meanings, such as anger, fear, *negesime* (sense of shame), love and happiness, and *saya pokme* (raise *saya*). She further brings the issue of universalism versus relativism to justify the notion of self in the Lhorung culture and considers Lhorung's position in between these two approaches. The anthropologists declare emotions to be the part of culture (relativist approach) while most psychologists take the view that they belong to our nature and are universal (p.266). She notes that emotions for Lhorung are both cultural and grounded in the bio-physiological processes (p. 268).

In Chapter IX, "Personhood, Emotions and Ethno-psychology: Concluding Remarks" she discusses the theoretical implications of the knowledge about Lhorung emotions and mental states in terms of their ethno-psychology (p.274). The Lhorung, at times, define an individual according to such roles as household head, husband, wife, brother, and mother (p.274). Lhorung emotions are noted as: a) the context or the situation of the emotion, b) the mental state, c) behavioral expression d) physiological accompaniments and e) linguistic and paralinguistic expression (p.276). She concludes that how folk models of personality, thinking, and or feeling may be used to explore three domains: that of cultural patterns and symbolic structures (i.e. the cultural system); that of social institutions, marriage ,ritual ,socialization and social life; and the domain of individual motivation, individual psychology, and experience. In brief, the other worlds of Lhorung are closely embedded with their notions of self and emotion (p.281).

Hardman, however, does not discuss women's role in economy as dimensions of Thulung social life vis-à-vis expressing the notions of "self" and "emotion" in Thulung culture. Nowhere sexual life of Thulung women is highlighted as the reflection of dissatisfaction though she presents herself as a sick person to understand the phenomenological world of Thulung. No doubt, her narratives of the whole book are based on Kahili's story and her worldviews. She focuses her entire discussion of Thulung women personhood and acquisition of power exclusively on men even without even alluding to similar (or dissimilar) processes through which girls become women. When the reader is introduced to various spirits, their gender is not specified. Her narratives between males and females, and humans and animals in which much of the tension results are from the respective gender of the protagonists. She hardly mentions how sacred are the oral texts as these texts could be sung only in the particular rituals or occasions in many Rai cultures.

Description of indigenous peoples and their culture is not a new phenomenon in the anthropology of Nepal. But the ethnography of this kind has an important role in the anthropology of Nepal for a number of reasons:

- i) How qualitative methods could be used in understanding of the cognitive, emotional and behavioral development of groups of people;
- ii) Context and meaning in social inquiry, particularly extensive uses of diaries to provide meaning of the specific cultural context; and
- iii) Socio-psychological perspective on gender.

At the same time, she has not forgotten to include the romantic British approach describing her position in presenting the text such as "how to urinate standing up without lifting my skirt"(p. xviii), and her "masculine dress and small breasts" (p.24) and so on.

Some typological errors are rather apparent on many pages of the text such as "noone" for "none"(p. 21,p.188), Yama not Zema (p.154), nigh for night (p. 244) and so on. Sometimes, Hardman overexplains by saying "Brahmin and Chhetri categorize Lhorung low caste and untouchable"(p.177). No doubt, they are considered lower caste than they but by no means Brahmins /Chhetris of the area would dare to say that they are untouchables.

Again, one wonders, why the publication of the book was delayed for more than two decades. The book is very interesting for readers for two

reasons: i) Hardman did field work on Lhorung Rai between 1976-78 and also paid visits of shorter duration between 1978-80, but received her PhD degree from the Lhorung material only in 1990 (after the gap of more than ten years) and the book was published eventually in 2000, almost the gap of 20 years), and ii) Nowhere in the book she mentions that she was associated with "the Status of Women Project" run by CEDA, Tribhuvan University though everybody knew that she was one of the members of the study team, to study Lhorung Rai. Only in bibliography she notes, "Lhorung Women of the Arun Valley (not dated)."

Notwithstanding, this is an important contribution to the ethno-psychology of Rai people of Eastern Nepal. The virtue of this book is that she brings a lot of mythological stories together in a coherent and skilful way to give a meaning of self and identity in the local culture. Her stories have become compelling because of her ability to talk and understand the Lhorung language.

Finally, though feminist and gender studies is finding a good space in the anthropology of Nepal since the 1980s there is an increasing awareness of the importance of women and gender issues in indigenous communities, organizations and research but little attention is given to ethno-psychological perspectives of people. Her annexes equally provide rich materials for those who are interested in knowing more about the Rai culture (A1 provides characteristic features of the Lhorung language, A2 Kinship terminology, and, A3 Lhorung texts, where she provides texts of *nuagi*, *sokma*, *umcha*, words to recall infant's lawa, chant of the women after marriage and to raise *saya* in the Thulung language). I feel that these texts would have been more meaningful to the lay readers if they were translated into the English language, as they are the source of ethno-history of local people.

– Dilli Ram Dahal